

THE
ORPHAN HEIRESS

OF

SIR GREGORY.

AN

HISTORICAL FRAGMENT,

OF THE

LAST CENTURY.

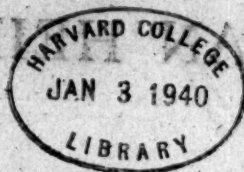
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ADVERTISEMENT,

BY THE EDITOR.

ALMOST every Book is prefaced by an apology. Perhaps no Publication ever required one more than the present. Its apology, however, if it be capable of any, must be found in itself. I shall only request of the Reader, to keep in recollection the Time and the Characters of which it treats: and that it is a Fragment from the pen of Sir Gregory's Chaplain; a man of strong prejudices, and not free from certain superstitions. Hence, indeed, it may afford ample subject for the wit of Ridicule, and the fastidiousness of Criticism. The opinion of a Reader, however, is often influenced by the temper in which he happens to read; and as I do not find this Fragment contains any thing injurious to the interests of morality, I submit it, with proper deference, to the candour and protection of the Publick.

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London,
March, 1799.

ADVERTISEMENT.

BY THE EDITOR.

ALMOST every Book is required to be
I have in this volume now required are more than
the present in every instance. It is in the hands of
any, may be found in the Library of the
Library, to be in possession of the Time and the Cha-
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London.
G. Nichols, 1800.

THE ORPHAN HEIRESS

SIR GREGORY.

CHAPTER I.

THE venerable Edifice has now, indeed, the appearance of splendid desolation. Yet few are the years since it was the seat of domestick happiness, and the residence of tried loyalty; the asylum of true religion, and the mansion of cheerful hospitality. Blessed were the days of good Sir Gregory, and his lady, dame Judith; and thrice blessed the sabbaths that saw them duly enter the chapel, followed by their respectful tenantry, and the faithful servants of

their household. All was solemnity : but it was the sacred solemnity of heavenly peace and concord. Prayer and praise alone seemed most fit for such a place, and such a congregation. I ascended the pulpit almost in vain. My flock was in its fold. Among my people I had little to censure. They had been taught in their infancy to list their duty : to fear God ; to honour the King ; to obey those in authority under him ; to love, and to assist, one another. They did so : In practice each was as good a Divine as myself. But they respected and loved me. The good Sir Gregory set them the example ; and his example, on all occasions, they were emulous to follow. Hence they insured their happiness on earth ; they anticipated, in some measure, the happiness of a better world ; because they did not permit their passions, or the evil propensities of human nature, to abuse their present

state. Such are the salutary effects of an early sense of duty.

Alas, my poor flock!—but I must not weep for them. They are in the enjoyment of all the felicities which I was deputed to promise them. They have escaped from rivers of blood, and are tasting the waters of everlasting life. They have received their white raiments, and all tears are washed from their eyes. No, I must not weep for them; yet cannot I refrain some selfish tears, to think that their poor shepherd should be left, the desolate priest of a forsaken altar; the despised minister of a church profaned.

Of this venerable House I promised Sir Gregory to write the history. I have shewn what it was in the days of the Norman, and of succeeding monarchs, to the time of Elizabeth. It was in her reign that it received the

addition of the tower and the turret at the West end. The chapel was then enlarged. Every thing in it that had a peculiar reference to Popish ceremonies, was removed. The painted windows, so exquisite to this hour, were always a theme of admiration. They have remained untouched; save that the effigies of Antichrist were demolished, and their place supplied by those of the Queen. The antique richness of the altar-piece cannot be excelled. The chapel is at the East end of the House; and derives some addition to its religious gloom from the ancient wood arising at a small distance on each side. In the vaults, lie the sacred ashes of the different Families who have possessed the domain, which came by marriage to the ancestor of Sir Gregory, in the days of the Eighth Henry.

The House is a noble mansion of stone, over-run with ivy; one side of it

being on a high hill. It contains many extensive rooms: a great variety of painted windows, rich tapestry hangings, family pictures, and other reliques, denoting the magnificence of former times. There are suites of rooms up stairs, thus ornamented, that were seldom entered; and became still less so in the time of Sir Gregory, who added a wing to the House in the modern taste, adjoining, and thereby, in fact, contrasting the dimensions of the Pleasure Garden, which is, nevertheless, very spacious, and terminated by a flight of stone steps, bedecked with fanciful figures, leading to an avenue of oaks, on each side of which are other gardens, abounding in fruits, and variegated with shrubberies; interspersed with whatever may be useful and esculent, continually contrasted with what is ornamental and beautiful. Nor are there wanting cascades of falling water, supplying ponds shaded with the drooping willow, and pleasant rivulets,

bordered with green grass and bending flowers. On the East and the North, the gardens are sheltered by an immense forest. That side of the House which stands on an eminence, commands a delightful view of meadow and distant villages, watered by the river Trent, which meanders among them, after passing the foot of the woody mountain on which the mansion stands.

Such was the residence of the good Sir Gregory. It was the sanctuary of happiness; for none but the virtuous dwelt in it. We had been boys together. Whilst we were at Oxford my fortunes failed me. This circumstance but the more endeared me to Gregory, who, to the character of Friend, now united that of Benefactor. About this time, he lost his father, and travelled abroad; whilst I remained at the University, determined duly to qualify myself for the sacred office of a Minister.

of God. On his return, he made me independent, even on himself. But I insisted on being the Chaplain of his family. I had apartments allotted me; and soon afterwards joined the hands of Sir Gregory and his lady, dame Judith. Admiration and affection for each other's virtues, had already joined their hearts.

How sweetly the years rolled on!—what delightful festivals!—what sacred fasts!—It was here that Peace and Righteousness kissed each other. It was here that Pleasure, born of such parents, reigned uninterrupted; save by those visitations of Providence, which, however afflictive, are kindly meant to remind us of our mortality. Of these Sir Gregory suffered many in the death of his children; one, out of eight, only surviving. It was my dearest joy to baptize them; it was my sad fate to bury them; till the tender Margaret alone was left.

Political fury now began to assail us. The disputes between King Charles and his Parliament were to be decided in the field.—Part of the people, misled by a desperate faction, armed against their Sovereign. The legions of Darkness and Hypocrisy prevailed. The monarch was dethroned, and murdered. The detestable serpent, crawling on the earth, erected its crest in the throne of the King. That insatiable monster, the People, gorged the blood of Royalty. The eternal order was reversed. The kingdom shook with dire convulsion; and there was jubilee in Hell. Religion was banished; and it was now a crime to be loyal. Lucifer was lord of the ascendant. The blood-stained Cromwell afterwards usurped dominion, while the Son of the King wandered in unknown lands.

These were not times for Virtue to stand neuter. The principles of Sir

Gregory were well known. His House was the asylum of persecuted loyalty; and certain of the neighbouring nobility, whose castles had been destroyed by the rebels, fled hither for shelter. Our mansion was as well fortified, and the tower as well stored with small arms, as circumstances would admit. Soon after the battle of Edgehill, Sir Gregory's destruction was determined upon.

On the approach of the enemy, the inhabitants of the adjacent villages came in crowds to Sir Gregory, who at once gave them arms and protection. In the mean time, the lady Judith, and the infant Margaret, with the women of the household, were put under my charge, and we were conveyed to a remote corner of the county, concealing ourselves in a thick part of Sherwood forest, and in the Lodge of a Ranger, whose situation had been procured through Sir Gregory's interest.

The hours passed heavily. Our fears and anxieties gave shape and colour to every surrounding object. Our imaginations armed every blast of wind with the dying groans of Sir Gregory. Every slight noise, our fear converted into the advance of hostility. On the fourth day, the lady Judith, wandering with her little daughter in the forest, a short distance from our abode, saw a House-Pigeon settle on a tree. Fatal prognostick of approaching death in the family of such as chance to discover it *! With fearful and hasty step she sought me, wishing that I too should behold the omen. I endeavoured to persuade her, it was a Ring-Dove of the wood. This I trusted might be the case, and with this idea I comforted her as we went along. I partly hoped the bird might be flown away, and thus prevent a con-

* This is yet an article of village belief in Nottinghamshire, as well as in various other counties.—ED.

firmation of her fears, and give my supposition its full weight. It was in vain to talk of superstition. It is deemed a phenomenon to see the house-pigeon settle on a tree. The phenomenon had preceded the death of two of Sir Gregory's children. Doubtless, my philosophy held all this in contempt: but what, alas, avails philosophy against popular opinion, confirmed by a few instances of fact? In momentous times, how important are little events!

The lady Judith hurried along, and, trembling, brought me to the tree. It was an oak, which appeared to have been deprived of its upper branches by lightning. On a withered stalk sat the fatal pigeon. The lady Judith, already pale, pointed at it, without uttering a word. "O mama!" exclaimed the little Margaret, "what a pretty pigeon!" The child's voice alarmed the bird, and it flew away, dropping a black feather

at the foot of the lady Judith. She was too much terrified to notice it; and we hastened from the spot.

This simple circumstance made a deep impression on her mind. She retired early to her chamber. About two in the morning, as I lay ruminating on my bed, I heard a horse coming towards the house, on a full gallop. I instantly arose, and, looking out at the window, demanded who was there? The stranger answered, "A friend to the friends of Sir Gregory."—"How fares Sir Gregory?" I asked. "The enemy," he replied, "has prevailed: Sir Gregory is slain."

I descended, and admitted the stranger; at the same time, calling a servant to put up his horse, and to serve some refreshment. The stranger proved to be one of the Willoughbys; a gentleman of strict honour, and long the friend of

Sir Gregory. He was also somewhat related to the lady Judith. He informed me, that they resisted the rebels nearly two days, destroying many of them as they approached. But that on the third, the enemy received such reinforcements as enabled them to attack the outworks with success, and, after severe firing on both sides, they entered the House about midnight, fighting their way with the utmost desparation; for they were yet strongly opposed.

Part of the mansion was in flames, which served as a tremendous torch to light the rebels. Sir Gregory and his principal friends had retreated to the tower at the end of the House, whither they were pursued; the enemy making great slaughter; the rooms being strewn with dead bodies; and streams of blood running down all the stairs. At length, they attacked the tower, which was bravely defended, step by step, till they

reached the turret. The remaining friends of the House were assembled here: and here Rebellion found what it was to contend with the valour of Loyalty. Sir Gregory, with a few others, maintained the post several hours, till they had reduced the enemy to a number nearly equal to their own. The rebels began artfully to retreat, and the King's friends injudiciously to pursue. The enemy turned short upon them; and, ere they could regain the turret, the virtuous band was butchered. Sir Gregory, indeed, was pursued into the turret, where he held a bloody conflict with several; calling aloud on his friends to follow. At length, he was subdued; and his head, severed from his body, sent rolling down the stairs of the tower; nor stopped, till its blood mixed with the crimson deluge at the bottom.

Mr. Willoughby had scarcely related to me these particulars, before we heard

a violent scream of women up stairs. We both flew to the part whence the scream issued. It was the chamber of the lady Judith, who was surrounded by her own servants, and those of the Lodge. But, alas, she was no more. She had thrown on a night-robe; but had declined going into her bed. She made it a seat of rueful meditation. From the time she had retired, her mind had been filled with the most alarming apprehensions, which Letitia, her maid, had vainly endeavoured to dissipate. A fever raged in her veins. She heard Mr. Willoughby pronounce Sir Gregory slain. Convulsions instantly seized her. The child was sleeping by her side: she looked wistfully on it for some minutes; and the convulsions seemed to subside. Taking it in her arms, she kissed it with great fervour, and in the fervour of the embrace expired.

CHAPTER II.

THE dreadful intelligence of Sir Gregory's death, and the manner of it, with the scene before me, had nearly overcome me. My mind was almost disordered; and I looked on the bed, and on the people around me, with wild dismay. The cries and sobs of the women, and the waking of the child, brought back my faculties; and I began to recollect that it was my duty to set an example of fortitude; that to me the faithful and afflicted attendants would look for direction and comfort. Often as I had administered consolation to the sick, and stood over dying penitents, till I was become almost familiar with Death, this scene was new to me. I was overwhelmed with sensations I had never felt before, and to which I must have

given way, had not the excessive distress of my partners in misery excited my pity, and demanded my aid; not only as the friend of humanity, but as the servant of God.

The awakened infant looked sadly about, wondering what had assembled us together; and began to weep, because she saw us all in tears. I told her, that mama was asleep, and she must not cry, but go with Letitia to her bed. The intimation was properly understood by Letitia, who took the child in her arms, and, casting a sorrowful look on her mistress, quitted the room. I gave the needful orders to another servant; and with Mr. Willoughby, descended to the parlour, where we consulted what was fit to be done. He proposed returning, and reconnoitring the mansion; to observe in what state the rebels had left it, and who was in possession of it.

Hoping that the sanctuary of the dead, under the chapel, had not been violated by the ruffians of Rebellion, I felt a strong desire to deposit the remains of the lady Judith among the ancestors of Sir Gregory, and by the side of her departed children. We were not now many miles from the ancient and fair town of Mansfield, whither I sent Francis, my servant, to give instructions for a coffin, and such necessaries as were fit for the present occasion. Depending on the care of Letitia, and the rest of the servants, I determined to accompany Mr. Willoughby; knowing that, with good steeds, we could reach Sir Gregory's House by the evening, whose shades would cover us; and we might depart on our return to the Lodge, early in the morning.

With heavy hearts we mounted our horses, and proceeded on our journey, and found ourselves within two miles of

the Mansion about the time of the curfew, and as the moon began to rise. We stopped at one of Sir Gregory's villages, intending to give our horses in charge to some of its inhabitants. But, alas, the houses were deserted; the tenants being either murdered on the spot, or slain in their defence of the mansion. A dead silence seemed to prevail over all the domain. At length, we deemed it most prudent to fasten our horses, and give them provender, in one of the stables of a farm yard; and, through bye-paths, pursue our way to the Family Mansion: melancholy approach to what so lately had been the scene of all virtuous felicity!

It was not without fear and dread that we gained the borders of the large gardens adjoining the forest. The moon enabled us distinctly to observe the tower, the turret, and one side of the House, in which there did not appear

to be any light. When we came to the lofty flight of steps, dividing the gardens, we stood still to listen. Nothing was to be heard, but the hooting of a solitary owl. We had pistols in our pockets; and, Mr. Willoughby drawing his sword, we passed the Pleasure Garden, and came to the private door, even with the ground, leading into the summer dining parlour. The door was half open, and we entered. Again we stood to listen. The silence continued. Knowing the interior of the House, I took the sword, and went on, Mr. Willoughby following.

The lower rooms being dark, I made the best of my way to the grand stair-case, on the upper part of which the moon shone with great lustre, and we were just turning to ascend them, when something leaped upon me. I started back, but presently found it was my own dog, who continued to leap upon me, and to bark

for joy. This occasioned an echo which alarmed us, and we fancied we heard somebody. But when the dog had ceased barking, all was still; and we went up the stair-case into the great ante-chamber, every part of which was lighted by the moon shining in at the large windows overlooking one of the courts, and commanding a fine view of another wing of the House. We ventured to throw open one of the windows, and, looking out, we saw a light glimmering through the ivy which covered the walls of the side wing. This wing forms one of the antique parts of the House, and leads directly to the tower.

I advised that we should ascertain what was in the House by firing a pistol, especially as I knew of private closets in the great ante-chamber, where we might be concealed, should it be necessary. A pistol was accordingly fired,

which returned several echoes; but the moment it was discharged, the light in the side wing disappeared, and the echoes having died away, all was stillness again. This determined us, not without some degree of apprehension, to proceed to the side wing, and thence to the tower.

In the great ante-chamber, there were some arms. I returned his sword to Mr. Willoughby; and, taking one of Sir Gregory's, we went through the various apartments till we came to the large folding-doors which led into the side wing; when, to our mortification, we found them locked. We were, therefore, under the necessity of retracing our steps. But what was our amazement to find the great door, at the head of the grand stair-case, closed against us! We called aloud; no answer was returned, save from the hollow echo.

As we could not get down stairs this way, we had no alternative, but to go into the upper rooms, the stair-case to which we had passed, and to gain the lower apartments by the private stairs. But, as soon as we quitted the great ante-chamber, we were in darkness. I contrived, however, to make out our way, and we soon found ourselves in the lady Judith's dressing-room, which, being over the apartment we had just quitted, received light from the moon. Here we sat down awhile, considering what it were best to do. The chapel clock struck ten. The sound of the bell, so often heard with pleasure, smote my heart. The objects before me brought fresh tears into my eyes. I sighed sorrowfully. Mr. Willoughby pressed me to proceed, and we descended the back stairs, which led us into the servants' hall, the door leading into an outer court being open.

By crossing this court, we should come to the chapel, which I was anxious to see. The pavement was very slippery, and we stumbled over some dead bodies. This dreadful obstruction soon encreased so much as to prevent our going on, and we returned to the servants' hall. Except from the light, which had so suddenly vanished, we had reason to believe the house was totally deserted. Mr. Willoughby proposed that we should regain the lady Judith's dressing-room, and there wait the return of day-light.

We went up the back stairs, and seated ourselves there. Throwing open a window, we earnestly looked towards that part of the side-wing where we had discovered the light. The dog, leaping on the window seat, and resting his fore paws on the bottom frame of the window, looked out, and barked. Mr. Willoughby said, "The dog sees some-

thing." I replied, "He is only bay-
ing the moon." The moon now shone
brightly on the windows of the side-wing.
Whilst we were looking, she was ob-
scured by an approaching cloud; and we
found that the dog was barking at some-
thing he had discovered in one of the
upper apartments of the side-wing.
We were not long before we observed
a moving light. Taking down the
dog, and making him refrain barking,
I called aloud, and said, "If there be
any person with the light in the right-
wing, let him answer, or I will instantly
fire into the room."

The window was then thrown open,
and the head of a man was seen over
the ivy. He cried out, "Is it a spirit,
or do I hear the voice of our blessed
Pastor?"—I recognized the accent of
old Matthew, Sir Gregory's house-stew-
ard.—"Is that indeed you, Matthew?"
asked I, in reply. He made no answer,

but we observed the light 'moving through the rooms, till Matthew, out of breath, presented himself before us. He threw himself on his knees, embracing mine with tears, and sobbing, partly for sorrow, and partly for joy.

He briefly told us, that the rebels, having destroyed all in the house, and robbed it of the plate in use, and whatever they deemed valuable, had been called to a different part of the kingdom, and left it without an inhabitant, except himself, who had evaded their fury by concealment, the moment he knew of Sir Gregory's death. We inquired whether he had not heard us call before, and the firing of a pistol? He replied that he had heard so many strange noises, both the last and the present night, that he had constantly shifted about, to avoid the parts whence they proceeded.

I now informed him of the death of his lady, and the desire I had to inter her remains in the chapel. This intelligence made him weep excessively. The chapel he told us had sustained little injury, except in the loss of the communion plate; but that the way to it was blocked up with dead bodies.

We scarcely dared to inquire after the tower; but, naturally, anticipating our wishes, Matthew informed us, that he had with difficulty, made his way into the turret, where he found the body of Sir Gregory, which he knew by the apparel; but that the ruffians had barbarously severed his head from it, which, however, he had discovered, and laid them both on the couch in my lady's dressing-room. "Good heavens!" said I, "and have we been all this time sitting by the body of my beloved friend?"

Now the couch stood in a remote recess, where the light of the moon did not penetrate. Matthew took his candle, and we followed him to survey the corpse, which he had covered with a sheet, on the taking up of which, he started back. I inquired the cause of his trepidation. "O Sir," said he, "the alteration!—when I laid him here he looked less deathly; and now, see, how ghastly!"—"Fear not," I replied, "it is the change we must all undergo. We will deposit his remains with those of his lady: in their deaths they shall not be divided."

Our day's journey and our evening's anxieties had much exhausted us; and I proposed to Mr. Willoughby to retire to rest. Matthew said, that if we would accompany him into the cellar, he would get some wine; and observed, that we had better sleep in a double-bedded

room, while he would lie in the adjoining closet. In this arrangement we acquiesced.

Intending to rise early, we lay down with our garments on, and were soon asleep. But whilst it was yet dark, we were all awakened by the violent thundering of the doors. Mr. Willoughby and I thought that a party of the rebels were returned; or that a band of robbers was come to plunder the house. The moon had sunk, a strong wind had arisen, and we heard the rain pour in torrents, and beat against the windows. Matthew assuaged our fears, by assuring us, that the banging of the doors was occasioned by most of them being left open on the ground apartments, and the wind forcing its passage thence through the rest of the house. Sleep was banished, and we lay receiving additional communications from

Matthew, till the grey streaks of the morning cheered us with the approach of sun-rise.

CHAPTER III.

WE soon quitted our uneasy pillows. The storm abated. I directed Matthew where to find our horses, and to bring them, whilst we examined the house. I went into my own apartments, and found them nearly in the state I had left them. Part of the new wing, which was built by Sir Gregory, had been demolished by fire. In the front of the house, and in the courts, were many dead bodies. We proceeded to the tower, which we could not ascend: the stairs were steep: the storm had destroyed the turret, and the rain, dissolving the clotted blood, trickled down the steps, and made it dangerous footing. Among the bodies I observed

many of my poor flock. I sighed heavily as I passed, and promised them a grave.

I was yet anxious to see the chapel, and knowing where to find the keys, we made our way over heaps of the slain, till we came to the door, which had been broken open. To my astonishment the windows were whole; but the altar-piece was greatly damaged; and there lay the dead bodies of some women, with their children, having fled hither, I suppose, by way of sanctuary, or to conceal themselves. But where shall sanctuary be found against the destructive phrenzy of Rebellion, and the bloody zeal of Hypocrisy?

We descended into the vaults. The dead had been undisturbed; there the ancient proprietors of the Mansion, and there the children of the lady Judith slept in peace. "Sweet innocents!" I

said, "your dear mother joins her departed angels. Ere many hours are past, she will sleep by your side." And I secretly wished I too were an inhabitant of the tomb. The wish was involuntary, but it was nevertheless impious. It implies a desire to desert our duty. Though my flock was gone, my cares were not diminished. Were there not many wicked to pray for?—some virtuous to sustain?—and the tender Margaret to foster, and to educate?

We returned into the House, and wandered over the antique and lofty rooms, which had suffered but little. Some of the large pictures had been shaken from the walls, and some of the painted windows were shattered. In the library, the images decorating the tops of the book-cases, were dashed to pieces, and covered the floor. Sir Gregory's great chair, with its crimson cushion, was standing before a writing-table, just

as he had arisen from it. On the table lay one of His Sacred Majesty's Proclamations, at the bottom of which Sir Gregory had written, "*May the Truth prevail, and the King shall be blessed!*"

The wainscot of this room was of curious workmanship: the borders of the compartments were deeply carved, and richly gilt, which concealed the secret of the parts being moveable. I knew this circumstance, and told Mr. Willoughby that behind those compartments were hidden all Sir Gregory's treasures; the lady Judith's jewels, and much wealth. We agreed, that it was best to leave them untouched for the present; and I carefully locked both the inner door and the folding-doors, delivering the keys to Mr. Willoughby's care, till I should have need of them.

Matthew now returned with our horses, and brought with him three aged men, whom he had found in the village,

and who had hitherto concealed themselves. They said, there were others in the same situation, who had not yet ventured out. I requested Matthew and the men he had brought with him, to carry all the bodies, save that of Sir Gregory, into the large cave at the foot of the rock on which the House stands. Nature had formed this cave, which was not only of large extent, but divided, as it were, into various rooms, by the casual disposition of its parts. It was sometimes visited as a greater curiosity than those subterraneous caverns which distinguish the rocky domain of the castle overlooking the flourishing town of Nottingham, where our blessed Martyr reared his Royal Standard. Matthew and his companions undertook this task; one of them first going back to the village, in search of more aid; while Mr. Willoughby and myself mounted our horses, and returned to the Lodge.

The evening was pretty far advanced when we arrived. A person had come from Mansfield with Francis, to undertake the funeral of the lady Judith, and promised to have all things in readiness for us to set out early on the succeeding morning, save one. I gave him directions to prepare also a coffin and shroud for Sir Gregory. I desired Letitia to provide mourning for herself and the other servants. A hearse, with the two coffins, came the next night. There was not any mourning coach to be had; but a gentleman of Mansfield, understanding our situation, kindly sent us his family carriage, into which, the succeeding morning, I put the little Margaret, the faithful Letitia, and the rest of the women: Mr. Willoughby and myself leading the way on horseback; Francis and the undertaker, also on horses, following the carriage.

Anxious to reach the Mansion the

same night, in order that the last sad duties should be performed without any notice that might produce interruption, we were under the necessity of proceeding with a rapidity unbecoming the solemn purport of our journey. But the times were perilous, and we were now the children of affliction. When we were within three hours' ride of the Mansion, Mr. Willoughby, taking upon himself the humble office of messenger, left us, and proceeded as fast as possible with instructions to Matthew, that all things might be in readiness when we should arrive.

The night was just coming on, and the road, besides its dreariness, was not in a state to admit of speedy travelling. We were now passing a wild heath. The air was chilly, and the wind began to rise: its keen blast swept across the heath, and while it shrilly whistled in the furze and brambles, the

rumbling of the hearse upon the rocky road filled the mind with a sort of terrific melancholy, and smote the heart with sad sensations. The heath terminated in a deep and narrow glen, overhung with wood, extending about a mile and a half. Its entrance seemed to be the very abode of darkness itself; but the rising moon presently began to pierce the gloom, except in those parts where the branches were too close to admit of her beams. We were here under the necessity of proceeding with funereal solemnity. We had not got far into the glen, I continuing to lead our slender procession, before my horse suddenly started. I applied the spur in vain: the animal stood fixed. I endeavoured to discover the object that impeded his progress; for he was not accustomed to start on the road. At length, I heard a rustling of leaves, apparently about thirty paces before me, where the moon shone, and beheld the bright glimmering

of what I took to be a sword, wielded by an arm of which I could not perceive the body. It vanished almost instantly, and I proceeded; my horse, nevertheless, testifying reluctance till we passed the spot, at which I had not strength enough to make him stop, and with much difficulty prevented him flying with his utmost speed.

The fear of creating alarm in those that were with me, and the still greater fear of being deemed superstitious, prevented my noticing this singular occurrence; and we arrived within the domains of the Mansion without further interruption. The carriages were drawing up to the great portico in the front of the House, as the clock struck Twelve. I thought I never heard the bell sound so slow, so deep, and so dismal: it seemed indeed the knell of a double funeral.

Fortunately, the poor little Margaret

was fast asleep. I directed one of the maids to put her to bed, and to stay with her. More of the villagers, and among them some women, had come to Matthew, and remained with him. Mr. Willoughby told me, that all the obstructions to the chapel had been cleared away; and that lights were burning in the vault. I now inquired after the fate of my clerk, and Matthew said, he had found his body at the very top of the tower. "You then, Matthew," said I, "must officiate in his room: and first, see that there be lights put up in the chapel, and then let some of your friends take the coffin of your lady into the great ante-chamber, while you assist in putting the body of Sir Gregory into that which we have brought for it; which done, let that also be taken into the same room."

Mr. Willoughby had ordered a fire to be made in the great ante-chamber,

and all the branches, except the centre lustre, to be lighted. Here I assembled those that were in the House, and those that came with us. We stood mutely looking at each other, while we heard the hearse drawn more closely to the door, and, soon after, the steps of men pacing slowly up stairs, bearing on their shoulders the precious remains of the lady Judith. They had scarcely set the coffin on a table, before we heard others coming down stairs, with that of Sir Gregory. I directed it to be put on the same table, by the side of his lady's. Sad meeting of tender and noble hearts, that had ceased to throb for ever! I desired that Sir Gregory's coffin might be screwed down; because his countenance, from the manner of his death, was disfigured, and rather excited an emotion of terror, than the endearment of recollection. But I ordered the lid of the lady's coffin to be opened, that those present might take their last look, and their last farewell;

whilst I repaired to my own apartments, and put on my band and surplice.

What strong sensations now overpowered my heart!—in the dead of night arraying myself in sacred vestments to perform the most solemn of all offices,—alas, for whom? A flood of tears, the first I had shed on this occasion, gave me some relief; and, taking my book in my hand, I returned to the great antechamber, where I found Letitia and the women saluting their dear lady, and weeping bitterly. Their cries became more audible, and were joined by those of the men, old Matthew in particular, when they turned their eyes, and saw me prepared to lead to the chapel. I could scarcely speak; but, having imprinted a kiss on the cold lip of the lady Judith, I waved my hand as a signal to go on. Mr. Willoughby directed the coffin to be fastened, and three men to precede me with lights; the bearers with

both the coffins, and all the company following.

There was now a dread silence, interrupted only by the half-suppressed sighs and solemn steps of the midnight mourners. Whilst we were descending the grand stair-case, the bell tolled one. The vibration of its sound continued till we gained the chapel. I went into the reading-desk. My feelings were indescribable, and poignant in the extreme, as I saw the coffins borne up the aisle, and placed before me. I offered a short and spontaneous ejaculation to God to support me: and I then read the appropriate service. My voice was languid and faltering, till I became animated by those parts which give assurance of the resurrection and immortality of the just. A holy fervour pervaded my heart, and my spirit was revived. Preparing now to quit the reading-desk, I was impeded by the sudden and unexpected

found of the organ, breathing a most sweet and heavenly air, as if touched by the finger of a cherub. It was simple and commanding. My amazement was almost lost in the divine solace of the musick: but I could scarcely doubt its being supernatural, when, after a soft prelude, an unknown voice sung, with exquisite melody, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord!" Never had I heard sounds so celestial: they kindled in my breast a serene rapture, such as men seldom feel, save when in holy communion with their God.

The musick ceased, and we proceeded to deposit the dead. The vault was spacious. The coffins of the seven children of Sir Gregory were arranged under the centre arch. I directed those of their parents to be placed on each side of them. The final solemnities were performed. The mourners renewed

their lamentations as my voice echoed through the funereal gloom, "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;" and the earth was scattered over the fading forms of the brave and generous Sir Gregory, and the lady Judith, pious and beautiful. As we slowly ascended the steps leading out of the vault, a few melancholy and impressive notes died away upon the organ; and on our regaining the open air, I was joined by Mr. Willoughby, to whom, I now found, we were indebted for our sacred harmony.

Returning to the great ante-chamber, Letitia and Matthew presented such refreshments as the House would afford, of which we partook slightly, and soon retired to rest. I did not lie down without giving thanks to the great disposer of all human events, for having permitted me to perform this act of duty to the dead, in the place, and in the manner, I had so earnestly wished.

CHAPTER IV.

THE next morning Mr. Willoughby and myself were astonished to find every part of the House, the courts, and the tower, thoroughly cleared of the bodies, which had been carried into the innermost parts of the cavern at the bottom of the hill, as I had desired. Here friends and foes were promiscuously mixed together, and shook hands in death. We descended among them. But curiosity alone did not lead us into these subterraneous mansions of the recent dead. We were impelled by Christian motives, and pronounced over them the ceremony of Christian burial. After which, Mr. Willoughby advised that these inner receptacles should be walled up, to prevent their being entered by beasts descending from the forest; or the bodies

being carried away by the impetuosity of the river, which, when swelled with winter floods, converted the caves into tremendous eddies, and roaring whirlpools.

These duties to the departed being thus finished, we returned to consider how best to preserve the interests of the living. We found breakfast prepared: Letitia, whom I had desired to preside, as the superintendant of the House, and the innocent Margaret were waiting for us. I could scarcely withhold my tears as I entered the parlour, to see the little Orphan of the House, clad in black, sitting at the table in mute astonishment at the change of her apparel, and looking round, as if to ask, why we were met in that large, old room, rendered somewhat gloomy, by the windows being painted and lofty. She was now in her fifth year.

"Where," cried she, "is my papa?—where is my mama?"

"Sweet love!" I replied, taking her in my arms, "you know that you pray to God every night and morning, to bless you, and to take you to Heaven, and to make you an angel. All good people go to Heaven. Papa and mama were very good indeed, and they are gone to be angels, and dear little Margaret will see them in Heaven."

Tears came into her eyes.—"But why," she asked, "did not papa and mama take poor little Margaret to Heaven with them?"

I answered, "Because dear little Margaret must stay to be made a very good girl, and to say a great many more prayers to God Almighty, and then he will send an angel to take her to papa and mama."

The tears began to fall.—"Poor little

Margaret then," she continued, "has no dear papa, and no dear mama?"

"O yes," said I; "God never lets good little children want good parents.— Do you love me, dear?"

"Indeed, indeed, I do," answered the weeping innocent, putting her face to mine to kiss me.

"Well," I resumed, "I will be your papa; and Letitia, here, you know is very good to you, and will teach you how to make yourself fit for Heaven, where I hope we shall all meet, and be as happy as papa and mama."

I delivered the child to Letitia, who embraced her, and set her on her elevated little chair. Mr. Willoughby promised her a great many fine things; and the breakfast hour passed with more serenity than I could have expected.

Mr. Willoughby and I retired to

the library, and put aside the secret
 sliders of the wainscot. In the recesses
 we found all Sir Gregory's writings and
 accounts; a large collection of letters;
 chiefly of those which passed between
 him and his lady, previous to their mar-
 riage; the family jewels, in a golden
 cabinet; and upwards of Fifteen thou-
 sand pounds in specie, being great part
 of the rents of his Estates since the times
 had become troublesome, and he did
 not think it safe to place his comings in
 elsewhere. Among some ancient ma-
 nuscripts, which we perceived would
 afford us much future entertainment, we
 found Sir Gregory's Will, written by
 himself. After giving various legacies
 to some respectable friends, several of
 whom had fallen under the sword of
 civil discord, and bequeathing certain
 sums among his servants, he proceeds
 thus: "And forasmuch as evil days are
 "come upon us, threatening rebellion,

"and riot, and misrule, together with
 "the overthrow of the Church and
 "State, and the consequent transferring
 "of property from the rightful holders,
 "into the hands of hypocritical robbers
 "and oppressors, so that the heir shall
 "sorrow in vain for the lands of his
 "forefathers; I have of late reserved as
 "much of my yearly income as I de-
 "cently could, without too much re-
 "trenchment of our usual hospitality;
 "and the same will be found in the
 "third compartment under the private
 "sliders of the wainscot in my library,
 "together with such other valuable
 "effects and jewels as it may seem
 "particularly requisite to prevent fall-
 "ing into the possession of the perverters
 "of equity, and the spoilers of the
 "land: To the intent that the same
 "may come into the hands of my
 "dearly beloved wife, Dame Judith,
 "and our esteemed Friend and Chap-

"lain; to be by them applied for the
 "proper uses of my said wife, and the
 "education and future support of Mar-
 "garet, my dear and only remaining
 "child, to whom, of course, will descend
 "my lands and possessions, in case the
 "issue of the brooding contest shall not
 "prove subversive of the laws. And
 "on the death of my dear wife, and if
 "my daughter shall also die, without
 "issue, I devise the whole of my real
 "estates to my said Chaplain, and to
 "his heirs for ever."

Thus, independent of the claims of
 friendship, and the duties of humanity,
 I found myself the sole and legal trustee
 and guardian of the infant Margaret.
 Under these singular circumstances, I
 held it to be providential that Mr. Wil-
 loughby was present on this occasion, and
 could bear testimony as to the property
 that came to my care, and of which he
 readily gave me a written memorandum,

reserving, by my desire, another for himself: but still his wife and children

We were still at a loss how to account for the conduct of the rebels, in neither plundering the house, further than firing the modern wing, nor leaving it occupied; and could not but imagine that, having murdered the owners, somebody would come and usurp possession of it.

By the friendly bounty of Sir Gregory, I was in possession of a valuable Rectory, on the banks of the Trent, and lying in the fertile and pleasant valley which extends from the castle of Nottingham to that of Newark. The Parsonage House, though antique, was commodious; the gardens spacious, and the orchard fruitful. At this Rectory I was obliged to keep a Curate, as Sir Gregory would by no means let me quit the Mansion. I had, therefore, an

opportunity of providing for a fellow collegian. Mr. Evelyn was of an ancient, but decayed family; a good scholar, and a good man. He had espoused a lady of some rank, and of rare accomplishments. The only issue of their marriage was a daughter, whom they jointly undertook to educate; and Elizabeth Evelyn, now Twelve years old, reflected credit on her parental preceptors. It occurred to me, that I could not more judiciously provide for the education and safety of the orphan of the Mansion than by prevailing on Mr. and Mrs. Evelyn to permit her and Letitia to become inmates of the Parsonage House. They readily consented; and little Margaret soon became not only reconciled to her new residence, which was much more cheerful than the Mansion, but to feel the attachment and respect which it was proper for her to entertain for Mr. and Mrs. Evelyn; while her fondness for

Elizabeth was more than that of a sister.

Margaret thus provided, I returned to the Mansion, the internal part of which I put as much into its former state as circumstances would allow. The new wing, which had been consumed by fire; the turret, which had been demolished by tempest; and the tower which had been defaced by slaughter, I did not attempt to repair; not knowing how soon I might again be compelled to flee. The chapel received all the reparation I was able to give it. The door had been broken down, the private room rifled, and the altar-piece injured. Sacrilege had even robbed the pulpit of its cushion, and the communion table of its cloth, for the sake of the gold which adorned them. These I restored; and finding that several of the villagers, who had not fled to the Mansion in the hour of danger, but had sought refuge

elsewhere, were now returned, besides those whom I already retained in the House; I sent Matthew and Francis to require their attendance on divine service the ensuing sabbath, when I administered the holy sacrament; previously delivering a discourse suitable to the occasion; strongly urging them to persevere in their duty to God, more especially by an unshaken loyalty to their King; setting before them the example of their late friend and protector, Sir Gregory, who had sacrificed all, even his life, to his duty. I exhorted them to attend the public worship of God in the chapel, forming a small, but faithful flock, as long as Providence should permit our assembling there.

In this state of uncertainty we remained a long time; the civil war still continuing to rage with violence, and with doubtful termination. At length the King was ensnared in the toils of his

adversaries. Concession after concession ruined him. "Our virtues sometimes serve us but as enemies.*" The King's love for the People induced him to listen to their pretended friends; and the Royal Eagle stooped only to be seized by the Vulture. The piety of the Monarch had made Religion captivating throughout the realm: hence Hypocrisy had become the prevailing vice among the unprincipled. The Faction did not dare to shock the kingdom by an open avowal of their ultimate intentions: but they reared a Pandemonium, and brought the King to a mock trial. The Royal Charles sat before them. The noble Deer they had hunted was now at bay: the blood-thirsty dogs were upon him. Before such a tribunal, what was the King to look for? As if even things inanimate could prophecy of dreadful deeds, the head of his walking-cane

*Shakespeare.

dropped off before them. The innocent and abused Charles they pronounced guilty. The People, though hardened in iniquity, wondered at their daring: they stood dismayed when the King was brought on the scaffold; and their hard hearts sunk within them, when they heard him solemnly utter the last, emphatick word, "REMEMBER!"—Then, even to the groveling multitude, monstrous and abominable appeared the wretch, who holding up the blood-streaming head of his King, with a lying voice exclaimed, "*This is the Head of a Traitor!*" The silent terror which prevailed before the scaffold, was felt throughout the kingdom for many days; and people fearfully looked forward to times still more calamitous, and changes still more dreadful: seeing that the realm was now in the hands of parricides and robbers, and no man knew what might befall him.

CHAPTER V.

PROVIDENCE yet permitted us to remain in the undisturbed possession of the Mansion; and I every week went to see my tender ward, and her temporary guardians.

Several years unexpectedly passed thus. The mind of Margaret expanded with the charms of her person; and I had reason every time I saw her, to rejoice in having placed her with Mr. and Mrs. Evelyn. She was tall beyond her age; but nicely proportioned. She was exercised in the elegant arts which give grace and expression to feminine softness. But the utmost attention was paid to the culture of her heart. She was "nurtured in the fear of the Lord:" and while cheerfulness and modesty made

her countenance lovely, her mind was purified by early piety, and sown with such seeds of progressive knowledge as fail not to flourish in appropriate virtues. Every other object was secondary. Though Margaret was taught to give the voice of melody to the harp, her own voice was far sweeter, when her discourse discovered her principles; while her language, rich and simple, was exquisitely calculated to convey the sentiments of a pure heart, and a fine understanding. Great care had been taken that the natural strength of her mind should not be enervated by that species of reading which totally unstrings the nerves of sensibility, and gives to the female character the cast of an apparently amiable, but unvaried and unmeaning, softness.*

* The Editor conceives the character of MARGARET to have been similar to one masterly drawn by an amiable Writer, in a late work, which is not only deservedly popular, but will richly amuse

There is a fashion in education. It happened at this period, that while one part of the community was attentive only to give their children all the fascinations of external show and accomplishment, the other was filling their minds with the absurdities of mysticism, or clouding their hearts with puritanical hypocrisy. To preserve the middle path was now no easy task. To have a due sense of the importance of Religion, to be influenced by her precepts, and to be elegant and accomplished, were qualities that rarely met in

the minds, and animate with the love of virtue, the readers of succeeding times.—“CAROLINE STUART, to the brightest powers of the intellect, adjoined the softest affections of the heart; nor had her cultivated endowments taken any thing from that tender simplicity which is the charm of female youth. . . . Although her heart overflowed with the most melting sensibility, her mind was so firm, as to have rarely abated any thing in those points which she had established as matters of duty.”

PRATT—*Family Secrets.*

one character. The King had most happily combined them. He was, what, unfortunately, we so seldom behold; a fine Gentleman, and a true Christian: a servant of God, and a friend of man.

The female part of the country was consequently in a similar state. Many of the most elegant women were the most dissipated. They even ran into the excesses of vanity to avoid the appearance of that puritanism which clothed Religion in a garb so disgusting: and, so detestable is Hypocrisy, they chose rather to have the reputation of being destitute of all religious sentiment, than of having imbibed manners and principles subversive of that sweetness and candour which ought to form the prominent characteristicks of the sex.

Among the untainted on either side, Mrs. Evelyn was particularly distinguished; and under her tuition, Marga-

ret, at the age of nineteen, was all that I could wish. Accompanied by Elizabeth Evelyn, she frequently passed a week or two at her native Mansion. By degrees, I had unfolded to her its history, and the particulars of the fate of Sir Gregory and his lady, her father and mother. I now revealed her own situation to her; the fortune which she could command; and the precarious tenure on which we held the Mansion and its domains. From this time, she became more attached to her home, and began to have a taste for its sombre beauties. The gardens and the library shared much of her time. Attended by Letitia only, she would sometimes wander in the forest; or trace, from the summit of the hill, the meanders of the beautiful Trent, as it winds through the meadows and vallies, coursing its progress to the Rectory.

Her predilection for solitude gave me

reason to apprehend that some tender impression had been made on her heart. I endeavoured to discover what books she most affected; but she so perpetually informed me of the bent of her studies and pursuits, that I found she was influenced only by taste in the choice of her amusements. I rejoiced in this: because a taste for retirement is a virtuous taste. Indeed, the literature then most in use among women, tended to inspire sentiments of religion and heroism; and they read few books which had for their object mere amusement*.

My friend Willoughby, who continued to be my frequent visitor, began to feel himself uneasy when Elizabeth

* Thus the elegant and accomplished Sir WILLIAM TEMPLE: "In King Charles the First's time, all wit, love, and honour *beightened* by the Wits into romance." The high-wrought dignity of the old romance was less pernicious than the flimsy laxity of the modern novel.—ED.

Evelyn was not of the party. Knowing his worth, and finding his offers were not unacceptable to Elizabeth, I became his advocate with her parents, and we soon greeted her as Mrs. Willoughby; my fair ward officiating as bride-maid. It was many years since I had seen the altar so graced: never, indeed, since the union of Sir Gregory and the lady Judith.

I hoped, ere long, to give the hand of my Margaret to some man who should know how to estimate its value; and I certainly felt for her all the solitudes of a parent. I was happy in the assurance that a proper sense of her family pretensions, as well as her natural love of what is great and good, would prove an effectual bar to her committing any act which should tarnish either.

She had hitherto lead a recluse life, or, which was nearly the same, she was

known only to such as were welcome visitors at the Mansion and the Rectory. Her friend Elizabeth pursued few diversions of which Margaret did not partake; but there was one from which, on account of her tender years, she had till now been excluded. Mrs. Willoughby had her father's fondness for the chase; and Margaret, in due time, was permitted to accompany her. I procured for her a beautiful Hunter, at once gentle and rapid; and, except a star in the forehead, milk-white. Glad in a green habit, bordered with a slight embroidery of gold, and a white hat, with a feather waving over a rich white rose, her appearance equalled that of the fabled Diana. I sometimes went to the field, delighted to see the rivalry between her and Elizabeth; with what dexterity they managed their fleet couriers: rapidly passing high hills, plunging into deep woods, skimming extensive meadows. This exercise could not be pursued with-

out bringing them into the company of such of the neighbouring families as equally delighted in it; nor could the appearance of Margaret fail to excite general inquiry, and particular regard.

Among others who frequented the field, and who paid court to Margaret, was the younger son of a distinguished Family, whose name I forbear to mention. He had obliquely sounded me. Next to Prudence, there is no virtue superior to Candour, though it has never received its apotheosis. I frankly told the young gentleman that I approved of his manners and his general sentiments; and that could he obtain the permission of Margaret, he should not want mine, to visit the Mansion.

I communicated to her what had passed, and was not a little surprised to find her utterly averse from receiving him, even as a visitor. "My dear Sir,"

she said, "a weak heart is to be borne, —for who shall repair the radical defects of nature?—but what happiness can be expected from the unfeeling? What fills me with horror, and calls up my indignant blushes for human degeneracy, this young man treats jestingly: I mean the murder of the King. Bad must be that heart which feels not for suffering virtue, even in the person of an enemy; and I would infinitely prefer a total exclusion from all society, than subject my feelings to be wounded, and my principles insulted, by such callous effusions, which to me are little better than the ribaldry of Rebellion, or the cant of Usurpation. Do not, dear Sir," she continued, "think I harbour an ill opinion of the young man's political principles, or that a violent cavalier only can merit my regard; I am impelled by the complexion of the heart: and what society, what tenderness, what protection shall a defenceless woman find in him who feels

not the most awful calamity, and sports with that which has wrung the hearts of thousands? He might as well have profaned the remembrance of my ever-lamented parents. Three days in the year," she added, "will I always hold sacred, and clothe my body and soul in the deepest mourning: the dreadful day on which my dear papa was slain by ruffians; that too on which poor mama broke her heart, while, with her dying kiss, she breathed into my infant bosom her spotless soul; and the fatal Thirtieth of January shall never be forgotten."

I could not but encourage these sentiments, and the observances they implied; for I well knew that a proper recollection of past afflictions is one of the strongest incentives to virtue; and sad is the state of those whose hearts suffer them to be afflicted in vain!

I undertook to forbid the visits I had

conditionally promised to encourage. The young man was greatly chagrined; and as an unfeeling heart indicates a want of liberality, I was fearful that from a lover, he might become an enemy; though I saw no more reason to dread his displeasure, than to court his favour. Still I had a presentiment of contingent mischief.

As Margaret, in consequence of Elizabeth's marriage, now resided wholly at the Mansion, and, instead of a pupil, became only a friendly visitor at the Rectory; I was under the necessity of receiving several of the neighbouring families, who had prevailed on her to partake of their hospitable festivals, and to join in their little dances. Sir Charles Sedley seemed on these occasions to monopolize the hand of Margaret; and scarcely any gentleman thought of asking her as a partner, when it was known that Sir Charles was to be present. This

peculiarity was sometimes displeasing to Margaret, who was unwilling to have it supposed that her heart had yet been impressed in the favour of any one.

Sir Charles Sedley was one of the most accomplished men of our time. Though somewhat inclined to dissipation, it was allowed that his finer feelings had never been blunted; while his taste and his urbanities were themes of general eulogy. Though he associated with the gay and the volatile, and his evenings were chiefly devoted to conviviality, his mornings were mostly passed in his library. From Horace, Theocritus, and Tibullus, he acquired a taste for those felicities by which their compositions are distinguished; nor did he court the muses in vain.

A man of refined conversation, and of fascinating address, could not fail to promote sensations of esteem at least in

the breast of an amiable young woman, who was a stranger to the prevailing manners of a court, and who had now little chance of ever seeing one, since the Crown was demolished; and murderous vipers crawled in the Palace of the King. The elegancies, however, which result from an education superintended by taste and discretion, Margaret possessed in a degree that must have excited the particular attention of so nice a judge of polished society as Sir Charles Sedley: while her personal attractions, greatly enhanced by the most unreserved candour, and the modest freedom of her enlightened conversation, must have secured a certain degree of his affection.

Margaret's demeanour was chaste and majestick, indicating a portion of pride which she did not possess; though she was perfectly alive to the claims of birth, and the consciousness of rectitude.

Hence none but the truly accomplished could approach her with that ease which bespeaks good breeding, and which, so far from implying familiarity, is expressive only of an acknowledged right to reciprocal regard: and hence, I apprehend, originated Sir Charles's partialities, and the deference paid by others to the strength and propriety of his pretensions.

CHAPTER VI.

IN the winter after their marriage, Mr. and Mrs. Willoughby passed a considerable time with us at the Mansion. We had also the daughters of our friend, the Ranger of Sherwood forest, with other company; and Sir Charles was a frequent visitor. Our evenings were often enlivened by the recreation of musick. The harp of Margaret was accompanied by sweet voices; and the chamber organ, many years silent, pro-

duced its full tide of harmony under the skilful hand of Mr. Willoughby. I rejoiced to observe that Sir Charles became more and more pleased with our parties; that he began to give a preference to the chaste and simple delights of the Mansion; and to be enamoured of the virtues, when he saw them thus personified.

The whole party had engaged to pass a week with us in the latter part of the Christmas holidays, and we were one night all surrounding the fire in the great ante-chamber, listening to Mrs. Willoughby singing a soft and plaintive Scotch air to Margaret's harp, Sir Charles leaning over her chair, when our attention was suddenly aroused by a most violent knocking at the hall door. It was late, and the night was stormy. I immediately went down stairs, when two strangers were announced, whom I instantly perceived to be willing subjects of the usurping Cromwell. I met them

in the hall. One of them was Colonel Hacket, a distinguished enemy to Royalty. He first addressed me, by apologising for the lateness of their visit,—looking at the great clock on the staircase,—which had been protracted, he said, by unexpected interruptions. He told me, that they were attended by a small troop of horse, and were come to take possession of the Estates of the late Sir Gregory, “who,” he added, “had opposed the work of the Lord, and had justly fallen a sacrifice to the evil devices of Satan.”—The Colonel little imagined how well I agreed to the latter part of his remark.

“I did hope,” I replied, “that the orphan daughter of Sir Gregory, who is incapable of ill, would have been permitted to enjoy her patrimonial rights, without resistance.”

“His Highness; the Protector,” he answered, “has winked at all that has

passed, and the Heirefs of Sir Gregory should have kept peaceable possession, had she not avowed her hatred to the righteous government which the Lord has established."

"Sir," said I, "the Heirefs of Sir Gregory is not able to judge of such high matters."

"Why then," he demanded, "did she banish from her presence the son of a Family, which has now been taught to estimate the goodness of God, by the extirpation of the wicked? His Highness knows her sentiments."

"The person you allude to," I replied, "had my concurrence to visit her; but the affections of young women are not to be commanded."

"They ought," he said, "to be made subservient to the good ends of godly government: and, because of her perverseness, her possessions are transferred to this young man, a friend of righteousness, and whom we have discovered to

be the next heir of the deceased. Per-
adventure, when he hath taken possession
of the lands of Sir Gregory, he may
espouse his daughter; and this will be
well pleasing in the eyes of the Lord
Protector."

The young man bowed.

"In this," I answered, "the Heiress
must use her own discretion: but she
ought not," I added, "to be thus
judged, nor thus deprived of her pos-
sessions, before she has done any act to
deserve such punishment."

"His Highness," he replied, "is the
best judge of that."

"But you do not mean," I said, "to
drive us forth to night."

"Ask Ephraim Hacket, my young
friend here, who is now lord of the
Mansion," answered the Colonel.

Ephraim Hacket, whose habit and
countenance were of the most puritani-
cal cast I had ever beheld, said, "that

though they came with an hostile power, they were no enemies to humanity; and the Heiress and her friends might remain till she should determine in what way to proceed."

I was somewhat at a loss how to act: but, shewing them into a parlour, and ordering refreshments for them, and their troop to be provided, I returned to the company, and informed them of what had happened. The women all burst into tears, except Magaret, who had familiarized her mind to this event by frequent anticipation. Sir Charles advised that these unwelcome visitors should be brought up stairs, after their repast.

They seemed struck with surprise at the antique splendour of the room, which was well lighted; and were somewhat abashed on being introduced to so large and unexpected a company, especially of women.

"This, Sir," said I, presenting Margaret to the Colonel, "this is the Heiress of Sir Gregory. Look at her well; and tell me if you think she is capable of any conduct that shall injure the general weal?—and whether she ought not to receive the particular protection of the laws?—Surely," I continued, "it is sufficient that she has been made an orphan: why should her Father's principles, for which he dared to die, deprive the child of its inheritance?"

"The government," replied the Colonel, "deems those as enemies to the commonwealth who presume to harbour opinions derogatory to its acknowledged righteousness; but much more so, when they take upon them to arraign its justice, and ridicule its administration. The age or sex of the offending parties, is no excuse; since the commission of the crime is testimony sufficient of the ripe-

ness of their judgment, and the turpitude of their principles."

Sir Charles declared, that it could not possibly be in the nature or principles of any just government to deprive such an orphan of her patrimony; and he looked at that orphan with the utmost tenderness.

Young Hacket said, that it would be her own fault if ever she, otherwise than voluntarily, quitted her native Mansion: and I saw he contemplated her with astonishment.

Sir Charles, who did not understand the purport of Hacket's remark, cast on him an eye of surprise and contempt.

Since I had been down stairs, Margaret, I observed, had changed her dress, and I was alarmed on my return to find her in deep mourning, till I recollected that the midnight hour was

past, and that the morning at hand was the Thirtieth of January. After all the company were re-seated, and chairs had been given to the strangers, Margaret, rising with inexpressible sweetness and dignity, thus addressed the Colonel:

“From what you have just said, Sir, it seems that I am accused of having committed some crime against the commonwealth. I know not the principles of the commonwealth, and therefore am unable to ascertain either my guilt or my innocence. It cannot be thought strange, that my private sentiments should, in some measure, be influenced by the peculiarity of my fate: and, perhaps, I do not respect as I ought a government, the establishment of which robbed me of my parents, and deluged my House in blood. Reflecting on what I have thus suffered, I am thankful for the indulgence of so many years residence on the spot that gave me birth; and I

have long looked for the visit I now receive rather as a natural result of the principles of your government, than as a consequence of any act or expression of my own. I was taught, Sir, in my infancy, to fear God, and to reverence the King. I do yet fear God; and I venerate the remembrance of the King: else why, on this fatal morning, am I arrayed in these sables? Yet I presume not to concern myself with the general weal. Providence permits the commonwealth to be. To command, or to censure the administration of its publick affairs, is beyond my judgment, and comes not within the circle of my duties. Of the departed King I dare to speak: and I must love and honour him for whom my Father died. In me you behold the Daughter of the brave Sir Gregory. But tell me, Sir, does a dutiful remembrance of the King, and of my Father; does my praise of their virtues, imply such censure and abhor-

rence of the ruling powers, as that it shall be construed into an act of criminality? Of what else am I accused? And is it for this only that I am compelled to renounce my inheritance, and quit the spot rendered dear to me by the sacred ashes of a Father who bled for his King; and of a Mother whose heart broke for the loss of such a Father? But it is no matter: when the oak falls, the acorns are scattered. I question not the will, or the power, of him that sent you: he best knows on what they are founded. We shall not oppose authority, seeing it could not exist without permission of a greater authority. But, Sir, considering from whom you come, and the general complexion of his mandates, I am bound to thank you for your courtesy. You find me surrounded by my friends, and near the reliques of my ever-lamented parents, and you drive us not forth with inhuman precipitancy. We thank you for the bounty of these hours of darkness.

The light will soon shew us our road into the retreat of obscurity. I am ready: and it is a melancholy consolation that this bitter cup is pressed to my lip on the day which saw my King bleed, and my country ruined."

She had exerted herself too much. The tears began to fall down her cheeks. Mrs. Willoughby arose, and Margaret rested her head on her bosom a few minutes. Every one was silent. She raised her head again. I was approaching her. Casting on me a look of great expression, she threw her arms about my neck, and sobbed aloud. I would not interrupt the tears which I knew must relieve her; but requesting Mrs. Willoughby and some of the ladies present to follow, I led her to her dressing-room, and there left her with them.

Returning to the great ante-chamber, I found Sir Charles Sedley in the midst

of a vehement declamation on the transcendent qualities, as he truly called them, of the Orphan Heiress; and questioning the young man, Ephraim Hacket, as to his relationship to Sir Gregory. The Colonel undertook to explain this, and it appeared that young Hacket was of an obscure family; but that his grandfather was distantly related to the grandfather of the lady Judith. I knew, indeed, that, in the event of Margaret's death, Sir Gregory's family would be extinct. It seems that Cromwell often had it in contemplation to give this Estate to one of his adherents; and as young Hacket had particularly distinguished himself in some dark transactions of that arch-hypocrite, it was thought fit to make inquiries respecting his family, and to see whether he had pretensions to the property of any of the King's friends; and this small grain of affinity to the lady Judith was thought sufficient, in the balance of Rebellion, to weigh

down the ponderous claims of an only daughter.

I proposed that we should retire, and ordered beds for the strangers. I desired Matthew to acquaint the rest of the servants that they must prepare to leave the House early in the morning. Letitia conveyed the same notice to the women: so that I believe few of them went to rest. I called on Margaret in her dressing-room. She looked pale and pensive. I endeavoured to console her. It was difficult to suggest any topick of consolation that was not already present to a comprehension like her's. She had turned every thing in her mind, she said; but her heart foreboded that she should never more sleep in the Mansion. I entreated her to retire. She said Letitia and herself had much to do, and should not sleep; and she hoped that I would be ready to depart early in the morning; for that she wished to avoid seeing those

"murderous looking men" again. For my own part, I had little to do to make ready, having long since conveyed all the portable treasures of the Mansion to the Rectory.

I passed a solitary hour in the library, taking an affectionate farewell of many inanimate things, which long custom had endeared to me. We all have our weaknesses, and local attachments of this kind: I pity the man that has not. My poor dog, as if impelled by an instinctive dread of being left behind, never quitted me. At length the day appeared. The snow which had fallen in the night, enabled us to see earlier than we expected. I heard Margaret's bell; and I found all the servants ready; old Matthew, with tears in his eyes, offering me some coffee; assuring me, that his young lady had taken some an hour ago.

Mrs. Willoughby, and all the female

visitors, Sir Charles, Mr. Willoughby, and myself met in one of the parlours, where we took some of Matthew's coffee; Sir Charles entreating us all to go to his House; and I insisting on our proceeding to the Rectory. Nevertheless, I said, I left it to Margaret, who presently joined us, and, with apparent cheerfulness, assured Sir Charles, that she would soon return his visit: but nothing less than the most dire calamity, she observed, could make her profane so sacred a fast as she should always deem the Thirtieth of January.

We went down into the hall, where all the servants were in waiting, except my man, Francis, whom I had directed to remain behind, partly for the accommodation of the Hackets, and partly for the sake of information of their proceedings. The cavalcade of the carriages and single horses being formed, we were making the best of our way through the

courts, when we were called upon by the troop of horse to halt; for that no person would be permitted to pass the outer gates, without the Colonel's order; at the same time they presented their musquets. This terrified Margaret, who said to me, "You see, Sir, they will not be content without my life."

"Fear not," I replied; "they dare not commit so barbarous an act."

Sir Charles, descending from the carriage, drew his sword, declaring, "that nothing earthly should molest her, that did not first come through his heart."

I returned into the House, with intent to send Francis up stairs to the Colonel, but was prevented by the appearance of young Hacket. He was sure, he said, that no impediment was intended; and proceeded with me through the courts. Having ordered the troop to wheel off, he went to express his surprize and regret

at the departure of Margaret so early; entreating her to return, and make use of the House as long as she pleased.

Sir Charles said, the lady was too much agitated to be spoken to by the man who compelled her to leave it; and desired him to withdraw.

Hacket replied, that he had certain propositions to make, to which she might possibly be induced to listen: and if she would not continue longer at the Mansion, he requested permission to attend her in her retreat.

"Young man," said Margaret, who was now considerably recovered, "whatever you may have to communicate, must be done through the medium of my best friend, my true protector," pointing to me: "it depends on his discretion whether you be permitted to visit us in an affliction resulting from the tyranny of your conduct, and the flagitiousness of your principles. Perhaps,"

she added, "you may be satisfied with the possession of my inheritance, without invading my peace. Let us now depart. You will hear from my guardian in due time."

We travelled about three miles, when the road branched out in different directions, and we divided: Sir Charles taking the young women in his coach to Sherwood forest; whilst Margaret, in her carriage with Mrs. Willoughby and the maid servants, took the road for the Rectory; Mr. Willoughby, myself, and the men servants following on horseback. The astonishment which our appearance excited in Mr. and Mrs. Evelyn, was soon lost in the kindest reception, and the most heartfelt embraces.

CHAPTER VII.

MARGARET speedily found herself comparatively happy in the asylum of the Rectory; except, that she sometimes entertained what I conceived to be groundless apprehensions respecting her personal safety; and her colour fled at the name of Cromwell.

In a few days, young Hacket dismissed Francis, my servant, with a letter of thanks to me, and an epistle, containing a proffer of marriage, to Margaret. It was couched in that hypocritical jargon which disgraced the conversation of those who violated every moral duty, and committed murder, in the name of the Almighty. Margaret could scarcely refrain giving utterance to her indignation. But I advised that we should

rather avoid coming to any explicit declaration, or avowed rupture, lest the malignity of Hacket should generate any new calamity; bearing in my recollection the consequence of the peremptory refusal to see the young man whose visits I had engaged to countenance; and well convinced of the extreme folly of wantonly making an enemy. I therefore wrote an answer to Hacket, stating, the particular prejudice that must necessarily exist against him in the mind of Margaret, whose misfortunes seemed to have left little room in her heart for any considerations but those of sorrow. That it was, nevertheless, impossible to foresee what might result from time; nor what might be the consequence of reiterated acts of kindness, and future approximation of principle. That he might oblige Margaret in various particulars, which I would hereafter communicate; and that, in the mean time, I left it to his discretion to adopt such a conduct as should

tend to diminish prejudice, and promote esteem.

Having settled himself in the quiet possession of the Mansion, young Hacket, we found, began to affect an ostentatious display of hospitality, and to court the acquaintance of his neighbours, some of whom, knowing him to have a certain degree of influence with the Usurper, associated with him, uniting in the sports of the field, to which he pretended great partiality. A change so important in his circumstances, had wrought some change in his manners; and, except in the cant of his sect, he had dropped much of his formal stiffness, and puritanical grimace. He sometimes called at the Rectory, but Margaret would never receive him alone. The civility, however, which he experienced, and his being permitted to see her in the company of the family, appeared to give him some satisfaction; and we had reason to believe

that he regarded the purport of my letter to him.

Meanwhile, the assiduous attentions of Sir Charles Sedley were continued to Margaret, notwithstanding the loss of her Estates; and he was totally unacquainted with the fact of her personal property being upwards of Fifteen thousand pounds, exclusive of her jewels. Hence those attentions began to have more than ordinary weight with Margaret, and I fancied I saw the sweet buds of affection springing from the stem of well-merited esteem.

Sir Charles, however, had not yet made any express declaration of his attachment. We knew nothing of the sentiments of his heart, with respect to Margaret, but what was to be gathered from inference. One evening, in the month of August, after we had taken up our abode at the Rectory, Sir Charles

and I returning from a ride through his park, I was speaking of the beauty of the scenery, and of the judicious improvements he had made in some of his grounds, when he interrupted me with a sigh, observing, that his father's involvements, and his own follies had left him little more than a nominal title to at least a third part of his Estates. "And having said thus much," added Sir Charles, "permit me to apologize for an apparent omission of candour in my conduct towards your amiable ward. I adore her person, and I venerate her virtues. But whilst she was in possession of a fortune so much superior to my own, I forbore soliciting her hand, lest it should be thought my principal object was the emancipation of my own Estates; and yet my heart would not permit me to smother its emotions: and my conduct, I am aware, must have carried with it a tacit demonstration of my affection. She has been robbed of those

possessions which, under my circumstances, sealed my lips, without being able to silence the clamours of my heart: and I think I may now presume, without incurring the imputation of selfishness, to declare what my tongue has hitherto refused to communicate; especially if your sentiments, my dear Sir, should not prove unfavourable to my wishes."

"Your ingenuoufness, Sir Charles," I replied, "demands, and has, my warmest esteem: nor can I be otherwise than friendly to such generosity of sentiment, graced by such candour. Fortunately, we have to do with one whose mind is not less open, and whose heart is not less sincere. Margaret is above all artifice. I have never asked, nor has she ever suggested to me, the sentiments of her breast, as to its tender regards. But we must not forget that she has great nobleness of soul; and it is not unlikely that she may be induced to

reject your offers on the very principle which heretofore forbade you to avow your affection. Margaret will not fail to remember, that she is now an Orphan, and not an Heiress. But she will also recollect the disinterestedness of your present conduct, when she is certain that you seek her for herself alone. However, Sir Charles," added I, smiling, "you must be conscious that you are sacrificing discretion to gallantry."

"I am aware," answered Sir Charles, "that I am warring with the vulgar discretion of the world: but, in my estimation, the forming an union with your accomplished ward, is wedding Discretion herself, enriched with all the other virtues; and with her, I am not less assured of personal happiness, than of future prosperity.—With respect to the loss of her Estates," continued Sir Charles, "it may, perhaps, prove only a temporary inconvenience. I do not,

however, build the least upon that; nor am I at all influenced by any such consideration. It is a matter of mere chance; but I cannot help thinking this detestable Usurper must tumble. The private wishes of the People are certainly in favour of the restoration of monarchy; in which case, I am persuaded, there would also be a restoration of private property."

"I am not," I replied, "without similar hopes. The trappings of Hypocrisy must in time drop off. It cannot be long ere the people will discover the nakedness of their rulers. Our present state is not so bad, as if, instead of assuming an appearance of excessive righteousness, all sense of religion were banished from among us. Our evils, at present, are partial. Hypocrisy is sooner cured than Infidelity. Let us but guard against the contrary extreme, and we shall do well. Even superstition,

with all its horrors, is yet less dreadful than atheism. Though superstition demands its victims, it does not exterminate all principle. But atheism pulls down the pillars of Heaven, blots out the sun, and buries all in hopeless ruin. Is atheism rare? Alas, superstition itself leads to it: unworthy notions of the Deity generate it. Infidelity is its pioneer; and the man who rejects the revelation of his God, has half denied his existence. If a nation, involved in the darkness of Popery, were to become enlightened by the tremendous glare of atheism, they would, however polished, degenerate into barbarous ferocity, destitute of all national, all individual principle. To the sanguinary enormities of the Goths, they would add the imperial cruelties of Rome. They would be bound by no laws; they would be restrained by no fears: for would any thing sacred be left among them? Like the giants of old, they would war against

gods and men. They would 'eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence*.' If they were a numerous people, they would seek to subjugate the world: and, under pretence of extirpating partial tyrannies, would erect a throne of universal despotism, cemented by the blood of millions: for it is the pride of vice, and was the first delusion of Satan, to act as the champion of Freedom; and to find in the number of her followers an apology for her crimes. Yet Providence would not permit this extent of evil, without educing much good; for there is nothing man can do, however atrocious, that He cannot render salutary. This alarming power would become an instrument in his hand, for demolishing prevalent superstitions, and correcting national vices. It would be used as an avenging scourge. A learned Prelate, and a worthy friend of mine,

* Solomon.

whose writings shall comfort and enlighten future times*, has justly remarked, that when the Almighty would severely punish wicked men, he delivers them into the power of men as wicked as themselves; and the sum of their misery cannot then be exceeded.—Happy is it for our country, Sir Charles, that we got rid of the errors of Popery, without plunging into the abyss of atheism: and I trust that our present religious and political darkness will be dispelled, in God's due time, by means favourable to the rights of conscience, and the re-establishment of rational justice, and general tranquillity.”

I was glad to find Sir Charles concurring with me in these sentiments; and we indulged the pleasing hope of seeing better days.—Reverting to what he had most at heart, he said he would rely

* Bishop Jeremy Taylor, Chaplain to Charles I.

much on my influence with Margaret, and would lose no opportunity of soliciting her attention.

His explanation gave me great satisfaction, as I believed Margaret felt an encreased esteem for Sir Charles, whose silence on the subject of an evident, and a very laudable attachment, had always appeared to me rather mysterious; and, in all human transactions, I am not less an enemy to mystery than to deception: indeed, the latter is generally the offspring of the former. I now consoled myself with the prospect of a happy termination of my guardianship; exulting in the pleasure I should give and receive, in delivering to Sir Charles, before my friend Willoughby, a considerable fortune, of which he had not the least knowledge, with a woman whose society was invaluable, and the exquisite beauty of whose person was somewhat typical of the celestial complexion of her mind.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE still small voice of conscience had, for some time, began to whisper fearful things in the ear of Cromwell. He now felt how galling is the weight of power ill acquired. He avoided the scrutiny of every eye, lest human penetration should discover that he was now weak as well as wicked. In every hand he dreaded the assassin's dagger. The sudden step of a stranger filled him with terror. The image of the murdered King was always before him. He seldom slept twice in the same room, never long, in the same house. Under his garments he constantly wore armour; and always concealed loaded pistols beneath his thorny pillow. His painful anxiety for his personal safety was not less than his unwearied vigilance in publick affairs.

Suspicious in the extreme, he was often at the gates of both his friends and his enemies when they least expected him. That he might enjoy the repose of a few hours in perfect security, his unlooked-for visits were frequently nocturnal. After a swift journey, and a slight repast, he would retire to rest; and, assured of his safety, would sometimes sink into a temporary forgetfulness of his power and his crimes.

It was in that evening which I passed with Sir Charles, that Cromwell paid a sudden visit to young Hacket; and the hospitable doors of the loyal Sir Gregory were thrown open to receive the Usurper. He immediately inquired of Hacket for the mistress of the Mansion, and was astonished, as well as somewhat indignant, at finding the Heiress of Sir Gregory had not yet accepted the hand of Hacket.

They passed many hours in close retirement, and deep conversation. It was near Two in the morning, when a servant carried lights up the grand staircase, the man of blood following. He had sat buttoned up all the evening. As he was going up the stairs, he flung his long cloak open, and the attendant, turning his head in passing through the great gallery, trembled when the glittering armour of the Lord Protector flashed upon him. He hastened into the apartment allotted him; and, taking the lights from the servant, sullenly closed the door, and locked it.

He threw off his cloak; but, according to a custom suggested by the natural fears and suspicions of guilt, he kept on his armour till he had searched every part of the room; and it was not long before he rang the bell with great violence. The servant returned, knocking at the door. "Who waits there?" was

asked from within. "The servant who had just now the honour to attend your Highness," was answered from without. "Send Hacket to me instantly," said Cromwell. The servant replied, "He is, by this time, in bed, your Highness."—" 'Tis no matter, let him be called; let him come, and that quickly," was the order.

The attendant flew, and young Hacket soon appeared before the door, which was then thrown open, presenting the armed Usurper, with a terrific scowl upon his brow. "What is your Highness's pleasure?" demanded Hacket. Cromwell, throwing to the door, took him by the hand, and leading him up to the fire place, said, "You should not have brought me hither, Hacket. Look over this chimney-piece, do not you know that picture?"—"No, Sir," answered Hacket. "Why," resumed Cromwell, "that is the portrait of Charles

Stewart while he was yet a boy. See, how he looks at us, as if he knew us!"

—"Sir," replied Hacket, "I will remove it."—"Remove it!" re-echoed Cromwell; "destroy it! We have demolished the substance; let not these shadows annoy us. Lead on, Sir: shew another apartment; I like not this."—Hacket called to the servant, and they proceeded to another room, which was approved of: "Let me be called early," said Cromwell, dismissing Hacket; "and as to this Heirefs, do as I have said."—He again fastened his door, and betook himself to rest.

When I returned to the Rectory the next day, having staid all night at Sir Charles's, I was alarmed to find my tender Margaret indisposed. "O Sir!" she said, "I rejoice that you are come: for though I am not ill, I am not well enough to be without my beloved guar-

dian, my faithful protector, my heart's dear friend."

"Why, my Margaret," I asked, "do I find you thus wan and faintly?"

"I am almost ashamed," she replied, "to tell you. But I inherit my mama's superstitions, and last night a dream affected me exceedingly. Indeed I seldom notice dreams: but they sometimes make impressions that are not easily effaced.—After wandering in pleasing vision, through the Mansion and its delightful gardens, imagination led me into fields waving with corn, terminated by the inviting shade of a beautiful grove, which I should have entered by passing through a flowery dell, had not my visionary progress been opposed by the sudden and terrifying appearance of that hideous monster, the Usurper, offering me the hand of the wretch who is rioting in my Father's possessions. The fight, though but in a dream, of this miscreant

Cromwell, threw me into a shrieking agony, which awoke me. I dreaded to sleep again; and a slight fever has since united with a depression of spirits, to reduce me to the state in which you find me."

"I cannot," I said, "reproach my dear Margaret with superstition in this instance. Dreams are not only involuntary, but often frightful. The infant and the philosopher are alike subject to their influence, and alike ignorant of their cause."

"But are they not," asked Margaret, "sometimes sent as presages of events, or directions for conduct, even in these times? We are certain they have been heretofore."

"There are doubtless," I answered, "dreams that demand particular notice, especially when, under peculiar and remarkable circumstances, their observance is enjoined by repetition. Of this we have had various authenticated instan-

ees, whereby murders have been discovered, or great calamities prevented. But it is well said by a wise writer*, 'Whofo regardeth dreams, is like him that catcheth at a shadow, and followeth after the wind. If they be not sent from the Most High in thy visitation, set not thy heart upon them.' One thing seems certain, that they indicate the immortality of the soul."

"Indeed, Sir," observed Margaret, "they intimate a near connexion between this world and the next: they seem to remove the barrier between Earth and Heaven. Angels descended into Paradise; and 'winged dreams,' which even heathenism, and the prince of heathen poets, allow to be 'inspired†,' yet continue to pay us nightly visitations."

"It is not surprising," I said, "considering their celestial origin, and the

* The Author of Ecclesiasticus.

† "Dreams descend from Jove."—HOMER.

unspeakable wonders they perform, that they should strengthen faith in the First Great Cause of all things, and entirely subvert the philosophy of materialism. While these supernatural shadows form adamantine stumbling-blocks to Lucretius, they almost abash the flagitious impudence of modern unbelief. That they should also create superstitions among the ignorant, is more lamentable than astonishing.—But fear not, my dear Margaret,” I added; “neither dreams, nor visions, nor the spirits that administer them, are permitted to bring evil to the innocent. Resume thy native cheerfulness: leave it to the guilt of Cromwell to convert dreadful shadows into realities, and anticipate in vision the punishments his conscience tells him are his due.”

Mr. and Mrs. Evelyn had for some time purposed visiting their daughter; and Margaret and myself now agreed to

accompany them, and left the Rectory on a serene autumnal morning. We necessarily passed at a small distance from the Mansion. It was with a melancholy emotion that we beheld the smoke from its ancient chimnies, rising in soft blue clouds among the high trees, under which we had so often reposed. Margaret shed a passing tear, as I ordered the coach to be driven faster. We were not a little surprised at being accosted by young Hacket on horseback. He assumed an air of urbanity, and civilly reproached us for passing without calling; assuring Margaret that she might always command the Mansion. "I really was coming," he said, "to call upon you: my Lord Protector has been with me, and has properly remarked, that if you do not choose to reside at the Mansion, you may like to be in possession of some of the pictures, which seem to be chiefly family pieces. I entreat you, therefore, to call, and select what you think fit."—

I was not displeased with this interruption: young Hacket was thanked, and we rode on.

Our visit to Mr. and Mrs. Willoughby had been of short duration, before we had the company of Sir Charles Sedley. I had imparted to Margaret what had passed between Sir Charles and myself at our last meeting. His solicitations became very ardent, and Margaret found herself under the necessity of deciding. She referred herself to me: "you, dearest friend," she said, "are best able to determine what I ought to do."

"This," I answered, "is not so much a decision of prudence, or of propriety, as of the heart: my dear Margaret best can tell its dictates. Sir Charles's worth is unquestioned; and his ignorance of your circumstances renders his affection undoubted."

"I confess," she replied, "that my partiality in favour of Sir Charles, has

been considerably strengthened by this occurrence. But will it not carry with it an ungracious appearance, that the Orphan shall accept what the Heiress apparently rejected?"

"That appearance," I observed, "will have but a short continuance; and will be agreeably dissipated by your presenting to him a provision which will greatly exceed what is requisite to disincumber his possessions. This I shall enable you to do immediately on your nuptials taking place: and my Margaret shall in all things prove herself the true daughter of the excellent Sir Gregory."

CHAPTER IX.

IN this pleasant visit to Mr. and Mrs. Willoughby, we formed a delightful circle of domestick happiness. Our days passed in such rural diversions as the season furnished, and our evening amusements were richly varied by the delecta-

ble charms of musick. Mr. Willoughby's skill I have before noticed. In Margaret's harp we had another Jubal's lyre; and the captivating strains of Miriam in the sweet voice of Elizabeth.

It was at one of these evening pastimes, when we had additional company, and Sir Charles having sung to Margaret's harp, the sonnet of a lover, entreating his mistress to fix the time for their union, that, without previously intimating my intention, I took the hands of Sir Charles and Margaret, and elevating them, exclaimed, "I thus certify that these hands, shall be joined in holy union, this day month." — Margaret broke from us, and hid her burning blushes in Mrs. Evelyn's bosom, where she was tenderly beloved, and warmly embraced: while Sir Charles, who knew not that I had so far been his advocate as to obtain the tacit consent of my ward, was at once confounded with joy and

surprise. "Sir," cried he, embracing me, "you are a good and holy man; and, whatever be the source of your inspiration, I bless you for this divine promise, which I know you will see fulfilled."

He then flew to Margaret, who was receiving the congratulations of her friend, Elizabeth, and the rest of the ladies; while Mr. Willoughby, opportunely enough, drowned the confusion of the parties, and all further compliments, in a lively Hymeneal air, which he gave with appropriate force and expression on the full organ; after which, a dance concluded the hilarity of the happiest evening I had known for many years, and which I regarded as the evening of a sabbath that was to terminate all my cares, and give me that serene happiness which blesses the decline of life; by the reflected happiness of those we love.

Margaret, the next morning, tenderly reproached me, for having thus surprised her. Sir Charles reiterated his acknowledgments; not, however, without a gentle reproof for having fixed the date of his happiness at so long a period. I engaged Mr. Evelyn to perform the holy ceremony at the appointed time; while I undertook to give away the hand of Margaret.

It was with inexpressible delicacy, a few days afterwards, that she intimated to me a wish that the union might take place in the chapel of the Mansion; at the altar before which, I had joined the hands of Sir Gregory and lady Judith. —“The civility of this man, Hacket, respecting the pictures,” she observed, “gives some promise of compliance with so reasonable a request: and I should undoubtedly feel greater happiness in the union, if that spot sanctions it.”

“We will certainly try,” I replied,

"to accomplish this point, though it appears to me full of difficulty: for we must not only treat him, in return, with forced civility: but we must remember, that he pretends a passion, which I am persuaded he is incapable of feeling for any woman; and he hopes to establish his right to Sir Gregory's Estates by that union with you, which he has more than once solicited."

"Indeed, Sir," answered Margaret, "the latter difficulty had quite escaped my recollection: but, possibly, some proposition might be made to his avarice, that should subdue all other pretensions."

"I understand you, dear child," I said: "we will consult Sir Charles and Mr. Evelyn, and take such steps as prudence shall prescribe."

These matters were argued at large among us, and it was determined, that, previous to our departure from Mr.

Willoughby's, a servant should be sent to Hacket, with a message to say, "that Margaret, with Mr. and Mrs. Evelyn, would pass a day at the Mansion on their return to the Rectory, to inspect the pictures, in consequence of the offer which had been made, and to mark such as the Heiress might be desirous of removing:" and that propositions respecting the use of the chapel, and other circumstances, should be made, or withheld, as the temper or behaviour of Hacket might administer occasion.

The birth-day of Mrs. Willoughby was always observed by her husband, as a little festival, and he usually gave a dinner on the occasion. Though the time fixed for our departure was arrived, we willingly postponed our return a few days, to be present, and had the satisfaction of meeting some amiable and distinguished characters. But among the rest, came a certain nobleman, who

had lately rendered himself conspicuous by the avowal of principles, which some admired as philosophical, and others condemned as profane. Before dinner, his lordship was particular in his attentions to Margaret, and contrived to be seated near to her at the table. The object of his wit, and the tenor of his conversation, before dinner, he continued at it, and this was, principally, a lively ridicule of sacred subjects, which he endeavoured to render pleasant by that slippancy of repartee which ridicule so easily and so copiously furnishes. I observed the complexion of Margaret sometimes tinged with the crimson of indignation; and sometimes her eye turned on him with astonishment.

Mr. Evelyn was sitting nearly opposite, and overheard a part of the discourse: Margaret cast on him a look of distress, on which Mr. Evelyn said, "Indeed, my lord, I must not permit

permit your wit to subvert my pupil's principles: and I am sure your lordship can find topicks of discourse infinitely more acceptable to a young lady."

"O Sir," replied his lordship, "that I leave to Sir Charles Sedley;" and directed his conversation to another person, and another occasion.

After dinner, various parties were formed for walking in the gardens. Having been there some time, and leaving Sir Charles and Margaret, with whom I had walked, in an arbour, chance brought his lordship and me into the same avenue, and we joined in conversation. He observed to me, that Mrs Evelyn had taken him up rather shortly at dinner: "but, perhaps," he added, "he thought it his duty as a priest."

"I am a priest too," said I; "but I should not have taken up the matter a whit sooner as a priest than as a man: for, with submission, I conceive your

lordship's opinions are not very friendly to the human race."

"And, with submission," answered his lordship, "you know, Sir, that your private motives for opposing them, are not less potent than your given reasons. But, surely, he cannot be unfriendly to the human race, who shall release it from the shackles of superstition."

"True, my lord," I replied: "but if you cannot brush away the cobwebs that infest the architecture, without destroying the temple, where are we then? Who will thank you to defend his house from robbers, by setting it on fire? I am not," I continued, "unacquainted with your lordship's principles, nor the sources whence they are drawn. I am well aware that the bad lives of some of the ministers of religion, and the general hypocrisy of the times, are favourable to your cause. I lament it exceedingly. But, my lord, the little true religion we have left, is far better than none. And

it is not because I am a priest, that I venture to say, even superstition, which gives to its God terror without mercy, is still better than the system which gives us no God at all."

"Pardon me, Sir," said his lordship; "we do not rob you of your God: we clothe him in brighter majesty; and think too meanly of ourselves to suppose human nature worthy of intercourse with so great a Being."

"I know your lordship's drift," I answered: "and does the pride of philosophy condescend to veil itself in the garb of humility? Is there, then, no revelation, because God is in Heaven, and we are upon Earth? I thought his voice was heard even in the depths of Hell; I ask your lordship's pardon: Hell, I believe, is not in the geography of your creed."—His lordship smiled. —"But," added I, "your lordship is not, perhaps, aware of the consequences resulting from an unbelief in revelation,

arising from this puny, and this false conclusion, that as finite cannot comprehend infinity, so infinity disdains to notice what is finite: a position which, however ridiculous, is the footstool of your philosophy, involving in it the destruction of all religion. You cannot rationally account for the creation of any thing without allowing the existence of a supreme creator: otherwise you would gladly relieve yourselves from even this particle of faith, and give to the chimera, Chance, the powers of a God. Some few madmen, indeed, contend for this monstrous absurdity; and 'the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God*!'

"It is some credit to your philosophy, that you allow a Deity. But here you stop. The worlds and the creatures he made, are beneath his attention. The

* David.

philosophy which deprives us of all care of the Deity, whilst living, consistently enough denies all care of us when dead; and Futurity is a word of no meaning in her book. To fancy that the Divine Being will, in another state, inflict punishments, or confer rewards, for actions done in this, is regarded as a baseless hypothesis, subversive of those sublime conceptions which teach your lordship, that we are too low in the scale of existence to attract the attention of Omnipotence, who, having given us a sense of good and evil, has limited our felicities to our pursuit of the former; while all our infelicities expire in the present effects of moral depravity. This, though it is not atheism, has all the mischief of it.—And could your lordship disseminate opinions more destructive of all the duties and virtues on which hangs all the happiness of this world, to say nothing of the next?—And as to ideas of the Deity,” I continued, “those of

your Philosophy are puerile in the extreme, compared with those of Revelation. The God whom you make little better than an agent of Chance, combining particles of matter, and framing a world, without the subsequent superintendence of the Being who made it, we adore not only as the Creator, but as the Preserver of all things. In Him, we contemplate the author of millions of worlds; the father of innumerable creatures; a single glance of whose eye pervades all space; who beholds at once the cherub, bending with awe before his throne, and the poor Indian, worshipping his thunder; and, without whose permission, such is his special superintendence of all things, the winged angel cannot move, nor can a sparrow fall."

"Such are the dictates," answered his lordship, "of your system, which may be erroneous; whereas, we are guided by the steady light of Reason, which, you know, will not deceive us."

"I never mean, my lord," I replied, "to disparage Reason, which I regard as a sunbeam in the, otherwise, opaque mind of man. But you must allow, that the divine spark is often clouded, and at all times in want of assistance. If Reason were what you would represent it, why are not all savages philosophers, and all philosophers of one opinion? The fact is, that you ascribe to Reason those qualities and acquisitions which you owe to Revelation; and do not always recollect whether you are indebted to Socrates, or Saint Paul. The brightest reason, if we may suppose Philosophy to possess it, can scarcely teach us even the alphabet of Divinity."

"I was not prepared," he replied, "for this attack on the learning which we pass half our time in acquiring; and even you, I dare say, are impelled by your profession, rather than your inclination, to renounce the simplicity of

Philosophy for the mysteries of Christianity."

"As to mysteries, my lord," I said, "Revelation contains not more than Nature; and every thing we see is a miracle. As to the simplicity of Philosophy, in what did it consist, but its uniform darkness? It is singular enough, that what antiquity was so anxious to discover; what crowned Socrates and Plato with immortality for having the wisdom to surmise, and which Revelation has confirmed; our Philosophers are solicitous to disbelieve, and eager to discredit. This, in my opinion, is as great a miracle as any."

"If," said his lordship, "the Christian system has so greatly the advantage, why do the wisest men reject it?"

"Wise men, they are not, my lord: they are influenced only by vice, or by vanity. In what," I asked, "does their wisdom consist? In entertaining

opinions different from those generally received: in endeavouring to make a distinction, which Revelation has abolished, between the learned and the vulgar; mere scholastic vanity. But these dangerous notions are the most cherished by the vicious, who form of them a shield to fight against conscience; by those who choose the darkness of unassisted reason, rather than the light of revelation, because their deeds are evil; and who, to avoid having their errors detected, and their practices condemned, prefer mining with the mole to soaring with the eagle.—But pardon me, my lord, I did not mean to preach. However, I find some apology in your lordship's example; and may surely be permitted to vindicate Revelation, whilst you retail the fugitive doctrines of philosophy, falsely so called. But I cannot help remarking," I added, "that your system is destitute of all utility. It has nothing to recommend it.

The duties are not enforced by it, nor the virtues encouraged. On the contrary, it is subversive of every principle which mankind have agreed to hold sacred, and snaps in sunder the bonds of society. How melancholy are its conclusions!—how dreary its prospects! It sanctions the evils of this life, and robs us of all subsequent consolation. Many, indeed, are willing to renounce the blessings, so they could likewise be exempt from the punishments of futurity. —We come into a world, full of miseries: we see vice triumph, and virtue suffer. Think you, my lord, that the Being who made us, delights in the prosperity of the vicious, or the unavailing sighs of the virtuous? Think you, that the curtain of death, which hides this scene of confusion from us, shall never be raised, nor the justice and mercy of God be made manifest? Let your philosophy teach you to think better of the Creator of all things; otherwise it is not akin to

that philosophy which Socrates brought down from Heaven to dwell among men: for that was the philosophy of justice and humanity; teaching mankind morality, and casting its dim eye, with earnest hope, to a state of futurity, in which these apparent contradictions shall be reconciled; and in which oppressed virtue shall receive far higher reward than the mere consciousness of having suffered well*. Believe me, my lord, the simple

* Considering the present unhappy prevalence of a contrary opinion, I cannot resist subjoining the following extracts, as appeals to *Reason*.—ED.

“This we are sure of, the more men excelled in piety and virtue, the more firmly they believed a future state; and it is reasonable to learn what Nature is from the most perfect patterns. And that the sense of Nature in this case is very strong, is evident from the great number of wicked men in the world; who, notwithstanding it is their interest there should be no life after this, yet cannot overcome the fears of it.”—NELSON.

“There are some indeed, and a melancholy consideration it is that there are any such, who would have us believe, that we die like the beasts that

boy who tends his flock with a Bible in his hand, is infinitely wiser than the wisest philosopher without one."

"A pretty bold conclusion!" said his lordship; "and well calculated to promote the humility, and the contempt of philosophy, it is intended to inspire,

perish, and that, when we leave this world there is an end of us. But these, upon inquiry, I believe, will be always found to be such, who first live as if there was no God, and then endeavour to persuade themselves and others, that there really is none; so that instead of regulating their Practice by their Faith, they do most preposterously suit their Faith to their Practice."

The Great Importance of a Religious Life considered.

"Shall I be left abandon'd in the dust,
When Fate, relenting, lets the flower revive?
Shall Nature's voice, to man alone unjust,
Bid him, tho' doom'd to perish, hope to live?
Is it for this fair Virtue oft must strive
With disappointment, penury, and pain?

No: Heaven's immortal spring shall yet arrive,
And man's majestick beauty bloom again,
Bright thro' th' eternal year of Love's triumphant
reign!"

BEATTIE'S MINSTREL.

But we are not walking on the banks of the Ilissus, nor in the groves of the Academy; and, therefore, we will, if you please, relinquish philosophy for the company of our friends."

We were immediately joined by Sir Charles and Margaret, whom his lordship had observed approaching.

"Well, my lord," exclaimed Margaret, "have you been converting my christian friend into a pagan philosopher?"

"Indeed, madam," answered his lordship, "the gentleman would not afford me any opportunity; and, I believe, thinks he has half persuaded me to go to church."

"I hope," resumed Margaret, "he does not deceive himself. Depend on it, my lord, your philosophy will never take you to so good a place; and, were I your lordship, I would go, purely for the novelty of it: for, after all, the Prophets and Evangelists are the soundest philosophers, as well as the best divines."

"Thanks, my dear child," I said: "that sweet voice in the cause of truth, is more captivating and convincing than the best-penned syllogisms of its opponents. Be ever as happy as cheerfulness and understanding can make thee!"

"I am sorry," said his lordship, "to think that I am not in the good graces of this young lady; and that my philosophy, for once, has led me astray."

"O my lord," returned Margaret, "if it never leads you further astray, you will be happy indeed. But beware: my guardian says, it is an *ignis fatuus*, that never fails to involve the moral traveller, who trusts to it alone, in the quicksands of doubt and dismay.—But come, gentlemen," she added, "the dews of the evening warn us to return:"—and, with grace ineffable, she led the way.

CHAPTER X.

OUR visit to Mr. and Mrs. Willoughby was now terminated. Urgent occasion called Sir Charles Sedley to London. A favourable answer had been received from Hacket: and Margaret, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Evelyn, myself, and Letitia, proceeded to the Mansion, where our reception was marked with as much civility as it was in the nature of puritanical manners to shew.

Margaret shed tears as we ascended the flight of steps leading to the hall door. She could not obey the impulse of her heart, by instantly running up stairs into her favourite apartments; nor adjust herself in her mother's dressing-room. I had observed her distress, and,

as soon as I could, called young Hackett aside; in consequence of which, he shortly left us, ordered refreshments, and requested we would range the House at our leisure.

In about an hour afterwards, he rejoined us in the long gallery, which was hung with pictures. There were two or three scripture subjects, which, more to evince his piety than his taste, he said he wished might remain. He took an opportunity of telling me, that he should give directions for beds to be prepared for us. I explained to him which was the lady Judith's, and begged that it might be appropriated to the Heiress: but, I told him, every thing would be managed to the satisfaction of his visitors, if he would permit Letitia to make the arrangements; and that I would resume my old apartments. In all this he willingly concurred.

Margaret, with Mr. and Mrs. Evelyn, proceeded into the chambers, while Hacket and I continued to walk in the gallery. I thought this might be a favourable moment to mention Margaret's marriage; but I wanted an opportunity of recurring to it. At length he told me, that he was by no means desirous of driving us from the Mansion, though he was obliged to quit it in a few days: that the Lord Protector had sent for him on business which might detain him several weeks; and that we were welcome to remain in the House so much of that time as we should think proper: "for," continued he, "I suppose there is no likelihood of the Heiress resuming the absolute possession on the terms I could wish, and which, indeed, my Lord Protector is desirous should take place."

In reply, I told him, that he must not attribute the failure of that circumstance to any personal antipathy in the

Heiress exclusively against himself: that we had more than once talked the matter over; but that it was impossible to surmount the prepossessions of the heart, especially in young women; and, though she was without her patrimonial fortune, it could be no secret that Sir Charles Sedley was anxious to espouse her. "She is, in fact," I added, "betrothed to him: but to render the union as happy as might be wished, we shall be under the necessity of incurring another obligation to you."—He seemed surprised.—"Nay," I observed, "it is a matter of no great moment, but she has set her mind on it; nevertheless, without your permission, it cannot be done.—She is anxious to have the ceremony performed in the chapel of this House; because it was there her father and mother were united."

He pondered this in his mind, as we kept traversing the gallery. "It is,"

said he, "a thing of no great moment in itself: but it would involve me in the displeasure of the Protector,—and you are not unacquainted with his temper. Not only to lose the Heirefs," he added, "but to sanction the loss, as it were, in my own chapel, will not be at all relished by him; and though I am the next heir, I know that all I hold is under the tenure of his will."

"May it not," I asked, "be accomplished in your absence, without your supposed knowledge or concurrence?"

After pausing some time, he answered, "I believe we may risk that."—I was astonished at his indifference on this occasion. We rejoined Margaret and Mr. and Mrs. Evelyn, who were taking a list of such pictures as my ward was desirous of being sent to Sir Charles Sedley's, whose House we now regarded as her future residence.

I wrote to Sir Charles, in London,

an account of my negociation with Hacket, and very soon had his answer, with some bridal dresses and presents for Margaret. He fixed his return a week before the expiration of the month; observing, that he should pass a day or two at home, in order that his House might be made proper for the reception of his bride. Nor were his presents unaccompanied by a sonnet, wherein fancy and affection joined to form a nuptial compliment of no small delicacy.

The spirit of party violence which had been so destructive to the kingdom, had continued its influence ever since Cromwell had assumed the Protectorship, and had, from time to time, generated many reports of an approaching restoration of monarchy. These reports more frequently originated in an artifice, practised on both sides, to sound the disposition of the people, than in the existence of any effective circumstance

to produce so desirable an event. A rumour of this sort was now very rife throughout the realm. It seemed fraught with a more than ordinary combination of probabilities. It was said, that the Son of the Martyr, concealed in England, had obtained such succours abroad, and had received assurance of such support at home, as could not fail to place him on his Father's throne; that disaffection to the present tyranny had betrayed itself in a part of the army; and that the general voice, were it not suppressed, would be clamorous for the King.

I ardently wished this might be the fact. I was aware that though the late Monarch had been driven to the commission of some errors, which might render the Crown obnoxious, while the phrenzy of innovation continued, yet the love of the Constitution was only dormant in the publick breast. I knew

that the flagrant abuse of power, always inseparable from its being vested in vulgar hands, would, ere long, rouse the people into a recollection of the happiness they enjoyed, before the King was deceived by his Parliament, and compelled to take up arms. I knew that the People, being brave and generous, must soon despise the demagogues of the prevailing faction, who possessed not a single quality that should recommend them to a powerful nation, released from the trammels of Popery. I knew that they would not long be defrauded by hypocrisy; nor cheated with the sound of liberty. I was aware, that their love of justice was powerful; and that they had spirit sufficient to re-assert their rights, and to restore the constitution: and I hoped that the time was now arrived when these principles were beginning to operate. I imagined it was from a consciousness of all this, that Cromwell was summoning his partisans

around him; and to this I attributed his order for young Hacket's attendance.

The more I revolved these things in my mind, the more was I astonished at the indifference with which Hacket treated the subject of Margaret's marriage. I could not help thinking that the restoration of the Crown implied also a restoration of private property, and the consequent expulsion of Hacket from the possessions of Sir Gregory; so that it seemed more than ever incumbent on him to have used all endeavours, if not to secure the hand of the Heiress, at least to prevent its being given to another, having pretensions as the next heir, which he believed to be well grounded; for he had not the least knowledge of Sir Gregory's will.

His invitation, and his proposed relinquishment of the pictures, I regarded as steps taken to ingratiate himself with

Margaret; in the possible hope, that by kindness, and by bringing her to a spot so dear to her, she might be induced to sacrifice her prejudices to her interest. Since our arrival, however, he had behaved to her with little more than customary civility; and had scarcely sought an opportunity of seeing her alone.

Part of my perplexities on this account, were cleared away by accidental information. As I was walking in some of the plantations and pleasure grounds surrounding the House, a labouring man bowed to me; my dog testifying his knowledge of the peasant by leaping upon him. Observing him more attentively, I recognized in him one of the assistants Matthew had procured, for depositing the dead in the cavern at the bottom of the hill. From him I learned, that Hacket passed much of his time, about forty miles off, at the residence of a woman of considerable property, and

and whom, it was thought, he would marry. That her house had more than once sheltered rebels in their flight. That her temper was violent, her person masculine, and her principles ferocious. That she was, nevertheless, deemed a prodigy of righteousness; illumined with the new light of the King-killing saints; perpetually seeking the Lord, and as constantly breathing threatenings against his anointed. That her publick hypocrisy had almost silenced the scandal of her private intercourse with Cromwell, who, it was said, was personally to give her to Hacket, should he not succeed with the Heiress. "This," added the man, "is what they talk of among the servants : for my part, I hope our young lady will never fall into such hands, and truly I am grieved to see her here; for it can bode no good."

I had now a clue to Hacket's proceedings. His apprehensions respecting

the chapel, and his indifference respecting the marriage of Margaret with Sir Charles, were accounted for. I concluded he would report to Cromwell all that had passed; and I did not think it would be advisable for us to remain long at the Mansion in his absence. The day was at hand on which he was to depart. He insisted on our passing the evening preceding it with him and some of his friends; and he pressed this with so much earnestness, that we could not decently refuse.

Sixteen days were wanting to the expiration of the month, at the conclusion of which the hand of Margaret was to be given to Sir Charles, whose letters informed me, that he was unwilling to leave London till he had completed such legal arrangements for the future provision of his bride as might be proper for her rank; "for," he observed, in one of his letters, "I do not at all reflect on

the loss of Sir Gregory's possessions : I only consider, that, in his daughter, I am espousing such birth, beauty, and virtues, as render the utmost provision I can make, infinitely too poor for her. Our Orphan, my dear Sir," he added, "brings her dowry in herself: the unri-valled crescent of the night loses nothing of her modest splendour for the want of her attendant train."

I meant to avail myself of Hacket's absence, leaving Margaret with Mr. and Mrs. Evelyn, to accomplish the promise of a visit to a fellow-collegian, who had come to reside at Edwinstowe, within a day's journey of the Mansion; and I purposed leaving it the morning that Hacket had fixed on for commencing his journey; the day before which being arrived, he reminded us of our promise to be of the supper party with his friends.

CHAPTER XI.

It was now the middle of September. There was a mellow warmth in the air that rendered the gardens inviting. Towards the evening, Margaret and I resorted to a spot which we had always marked as one of the pleasantest the grounds afford. It is a lawn at the top of the hill, and divides the garden from the avenue of oaks leading into the forest. As we ascend the long flight of stone steps which conduct us from the garden to the lawn, the prospect increases every step we take, and having gained the top, the seats on the lawn command a view of the surrounding country, the extent and variety of which furnish the lover of Nature with inexhaustible subjects of admiration.

"This happy spot," said Margaret, as we sat down, "rather increases than loses in beauty, though it is somewhat neglected.—How many delightful evenings have we passed here!—You see, Sir, they have not trimmed the hedge-rows behind us; and now I look down into the gardens, I see some of the walks want gravel; the box round the beds wants cutting; the flowering shrubs on the clumps are running quite wild."

"True," I replied; "but the larger objects retain their wonted grace and sublimity. Viewed as a whole, the prospect is truly grand. Look on those lofty trees: how the sun-beams play upon the trembling leaves, as if delighted to linger among the whispering branches. There is something wonderfully rich in the parting beams of the sun. See how, on our right, they illuminate those windows of the Mansion that are not entirely covered with evergreens; while the meadows at the bottom of the hill look

so like a flood of gold, that one scarcely regards the silver windings of the beautiful Trent. The cottages on yon little hill that variegates the valley, several miles off, and the church steeple peeping over the trees behind them, seem almost lost in the evening splendour."

"I never," said Margaret, "saw the sky look more beautiful than at this moment. You see, Sir, the whole arch of the blue firmament is fretted, as it were, with semi-circles of deep yellow, at almost equal distances. The small clouds that form them are perfectly stationary. How exquisitely magnificent! I seem to be seated in the midst of an immense temple; a temple not made with hands: inspiring one at once with awe and cheerfulness.—Nor are we," continued she, "without musick. There is quite a chorus in the forest. Innumerable birds seem to strain their little throats in an evening hymn to the sun, whose enlivening beam wakes them to

gladsomeness in the morning. That blackbird in the oak avenue sings delightfully; and the dear little Robin almost close behind us, endeavours to emulate him: how sweet and mellow is his little pipe! I know his tune of old; for I verily believe it is the pretty Robin that used formerly to sing near my window every morning.—O, my good Sir," she added, "how enchanting is all this! How much I regret that we must quit such dear scenes!—leaving them to those who know not their beauties; for, I suppose, Sir, wicked people have no real taste for pleasures like these."

"It is certain," I answered, "that they have not. The most captivating objects in nature have no allurements for them, further than as they may be supposed to contribute to their sensual gratifications.—But see, the gilded ornaments of the heavenly dome are vanishing. The sun sets. The hue changes

of every thing around us. The concert of the woods is at an end: the Robin only continues to charm us."

"O yes," said Margaret, "all are silent, save only the little bird of charity: I have often observed him cheer our walks after sun-set. His last song is a prelude to the nightingale's strain. He presumes neither to divert, nor to divide her sorrows; but before the first note of her mournful plaint, he modestly retires, leaving her sole songstress of the night.—And now he ceases, what an awful stillness!"—She paused.—Resuming her discourse, she observed, "When I thus see the sun set, and such a profusion of glories fade away, my mind is filled with a pleasing melancholy, which gives birth to useful reflection, tinged, nevertheless, with a thousand fanciful reveries, till the gloom of twilight raises a new train of ideas. Then I imagine I hear hallowed sounds in the evening

breeze, as it passes through the woods; and see fleeting forms arise from the waters."

"Fancy," I remarked, "is the most powerful of all enchanters."

"Believe me, dear Sir," continued Margaret, "I am sometimes tempted to think it is not altogether imagination. I know that Philosophy, as well as Fancy, leaves no space of the creation uninhabited: and I am willing to believe the air itself to be peopled with unembodied spirits. Nothing but the dun veil of mortality hides them from our view; as myriads of stars are to be seen at the top of *Ætna*, which cannot be discovered below."

"We are, indeed, very ignorant," I said, "of the extent of creation, even in the things around us. Science has furnished us with artificial opticks, by which we are enabled to see millions of beings unknown to us before: they inha-

bit the purest waters; they people every plant; they feed daintily on the fairest flowers, without destroying their perfume, injuring their beauty, or diminishing their substance. But Philosophy has never revealed to us the spirits which are familiar to Fear and Fancy; descending as angels from heaven, or starting as apparitions from the tomb."

"It is true," answered Margaret, "Philosophy has not revealed them to us, because they are hidden from the scepticism of Philosophy. But for their existence, you have all that testimony can give; whether historical or traditional, sacred or profane. I shall be told, perhaps, of the cessation of miracles. I know what is meant by a discontinuance of revelation: but a cessation of miracles is, to me, an idle sophism. Every operation of Nature is a miracle. Indeed, it is said, That only is a miracle which is out of the regular

course of nature. But what, my dear Sir, is the regular course of nature? Thunders and lightnings, volcanos and earthquakes, in some regions of the world, form a part of the common process of nature: in others, they are regarded as tremendous and miraculous. If we are so completely ignorant of what is, or can be done, among the grosser elements, how presumptuous are we to judge of the spirits that pervade and work upon them!"

"I will not," I replied, "impeach the veracity of history; nor can I altogether disregard the voice of tradition.

"Let it be considered what this course of nature is. Every man, from the lowest countryman to the highest philosopher, frames to himself from his experience and observation, a notion of a course of nature; and is ready to say of every thing reported to him that contradicts his experience that it is contrary to nature. And hence it appears, that when men talk of the course of nature, they really talk of their own prejudices and imaginations."

BP. SHERLOCK—*Trial of the Witnesses,*

But true Divinity has nothing to do with speculation. And, perhaps, you will find your theory ending in the absurdities of Polytheism, which are derogatory to God; or the terrors of Superstition, no less derogatory to man."

"O no, Sir," she said; "I contend for no more than Revelation warrants, and History confirms. I am well aware of the astonishing powers of imagination: and I am certain, that thousands of the tales of apparitions have their origin in nothing but the reveries of the fanciful, or the dreams of the ignorant."

"Most of these stories," I observed, "are either the fables of gothick darkness, or the fabrications of early piety to alarm wickedness."

"I know it," replied Margaret: "but does it follow, because many originate in fable, that all are fabulous? Several have the most unequivocal proofs of fact. The severest scrutiny, the most hardened disbelief, cannot controvert

their authenticity. The inference, my good Sir, is obvious. And where is the harm of allowing this? Does it generate fear?—what has innocence to fear? It is a belief that may encourage holiness of life, but cannot injure religion or morals. The supernatural agents of the Divine Being can never be employed but on commissions of mercy and loving-kindness to the good. To the wicked they must come in dread array. Perhaps evil spirits are permitted, even in this world, to torment evil doers. Guilt always embodies its horrors in the strongest colours. Hence we frequently hear of apparitions terrifying the wicked. These, indeed, are generally apparitions shaped by conscience.”

“Few men,” I said, “will allow of any apparitions, but those so formed; and many maintain, that the punishments of conscience, as they are the severest, will also be the last.”

“I have heard,” resumed Margaret,

“of such sentiments. They are surely the dreams of men who fear an hereafter, and are therefore willing to discredit its terrors. Eternity of torment is the most dreadful of all dread ideas; and, in the tender consciences of these demi-christians, incompatible with the mercy, and even with the justice of God. It is kind in them to limit their own calamities, and save Heaven the trouble of judging. But I never hear of their disclaiming a title to eternal happiness. Now,” continued she, “we know nothing of either, but from Revelation: and the same authority which assures us of the endless felicity of the virtuous, does, as frequently, as forcibly, and as decidedly, pronounce the doom of eternal misery to the vicious. This, no subtle commentator can explain away. And I should think the express decrees of God can never be fit subject of doubt or speculation among men.”

“Indeed,” answered I, “to talk of

temporary punishments in a state of Eternity, is no dictate of Divinity, and a wretched solecism in philosophy: but the arrogant presumptions of ignorance are sufficiently notorious.—If,” I added, “the spirit of unbelief, as to future punishment, was generally prevalent, the times, even with us, would be much worse than they are. Nothing but human laws would restrain men from the commission of the most atrocious crimes; for they would set at defiance those corrections of conscience, which, they now say, are sufficient to deter men from doing evil: and he can be no friend to God or man, who endeavours to undermine our belief in the punishments of futurity. ‘Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and not evil*?’ But the worst consequence of this laxity of faith, is its tendency to excite a disbelief of futurity itself.”

* Job. 20. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

"That, indeed," said Margaret, "is truly shocking. Surely, nothing but excessive vileness, which may induce them to hope it, can make them think so, if ever they do think so: but it can never be. Must they not belie their own hearts when they say so?"

"Indeed," I replied, "one can scarcely imagine that a Being, at all capable of thought, can entertain an idea so degrading to his own soul, and to the justice of God. But this opinion, naturally enough, leads directly to the denial of the Deity himself: and these philosophers, for such they deem themselves, are not worth contending with."

"What a vast difference," exclaimed Margaret, "between their faith and mine! I believe in millions upon millions of spiritual beings, from the cherubim and seraphim, who stand veiled before the throne of God, to the obedient messenger of Heaven, whether from a bower of bliss, or the gloom of

the grave, whose errand is to protect innocence, or appal guilt."

"You have justly remarked, my dear Margaret," I said, "that this opinion is not unfavourable to virtue: indeed it ought not to be rejected because vice brands it with the character of superstition. It were, perhaps a part of virtue to countenance harmless prejudices in times of irreligion."

"Prejudices!" cried Margaret, "are not the contrary opinions also such?—O, may I never lose the prejudices that teach us wisdom, and give us happiness!—and the prejudices of christianity, if so they must be called, will always exalt human nature."

"Follow but the impulses of thy pure heart," said I, "and thou shalt be happy.—But come, my love; the wind begins to rise, and cold mists ascend from the waters: we shall soon be expected at this farewell supper."

"I wish," said Margaret, "our at-

tendance could have been dispensed with. It goes against me to sit down with these strange people. Instead of my Father's house, I seem, while in their company, to be in the cave of a banditti. But it is the last time, and my dear protecting guardian is with me."— And, taking my arm, we returned to the House, and found Mr. and Mrs. Evelyn waiting in Lady Judith's dressing-room, to accompany us down stairs.

CHAPTER XII.

IN the supper room we met young Hacket, and three other men; two of whom appeared to be strangers. I have since learned that one of them was a brother of the woman Hacket was expected to marry. We soon perceived that they were people of little information; and, fixing on us an eye of scrutiny, we did not feel at all comfortable by the addition of their society.

I thought I had never seen Margaret look so pale.—A supper was served, rather elegant than otherwise, ornamented by a variety of sweetmeats and jellies, with devices, such as I had never seen at Hacket's table before. Hacket assumed an air of cheerfulness, and even of conviviality. The looks of the men were particularly directed to Margaret. This was rudeness: but I partly forgave them, as I construed it into a tacit acknowledgment of her general beauty, and the peculiar sweetness of her countenance, which never failed to attract and to rivet admiration.

Notwithstanding Hacket's endeavours, there was something cheerless about the supper. The strangers spoke but little, though Mr. Evelyn, who is very communicative, gave them opportunities to be social, by asking them a variety of questions. They began to improve after the wine had been a little

circulated. They praised and partook of the sweetmeats; upon which Hacket said, he knew which the young lady would prefer; and, pointing to a small jelly, beautifully transparent, and nicely decorated with the device of a White Rose, desired it might be handed to the Heiress. One of the strangers put it forward. Margaret, who had scarcely tasted any thing, could not very well refuse this. Though I saw she disliked the hand from whence it came, she received it very gracefully: for it was impossible to chill the urbanity of Margaret. She took a little of it, and was pleased with the device of the white rose. She called for a glass of wine, and, having drank to the company, secretly pointed to the rose, and looking at me, with a smile, I knew that she silently and fervently drank to the health of the wandering Prince.

We retired as early after supper as we

could; complimenting Hacket by wishing him a good journey. He ordered his horses to be at the gates early in the morning; and I gave similar directions to Francis, who was to accompany me to Edwinstowe. As we went up stairs, the rain beat violently against the windows; and we heard my dog howling in one of the courts. I desired Francis to let him in, as he usually lay under my bed, and was the companion of my walks. The poor fellow was very wet, and continued his crying up stairs. Margaret had retired to her dressing-room, at the door of which the dog whined and scratched for admission; nor would he be refused: but passing thence into her chamber, hid himself under her bed, and could neither be coaxed, nor driven away.

I embraced Margaret and Mr. and Mrs. Evelyn, promising to return in five days; intending to stay three of

them with my friend, and, if I had influence sufficient, to bring him back with me to Margaret's wedding.

I passed a comfortless night ; for though I was not deprived of sleep, I was restless, and vexed with unquiet dreams, which frequently awoke me. The violence of the storm continued. Loud gusts of wind seemed to shake the House. The hurricane roared in the forest. I thought I heard the voice of Sir Gregory. I was between sleeping and waking, when the imagination is most busy, and most bewildered. I again fell asleep, and fancied one of the strangers who had supped with us was attempting to rob me of Margaret's picture. Again I thought I heard the voice of Sir Gregory, and again I awoke. The chapel bell struck Three. It was very dark. I addressed myself in prayer to Him who guides the tempest, to guard with his especial grace the Orphan of the

Mansion; to shelter all those who had no house to receive them; to turn the storm aside from the benighted traveller, and defend him from way-laying robbers, and men that do dreadful deeds in darkness; and, above all, to protect little children in their innocent slumbers, that the spirits of the night might not affright them, nor the yelling of the storm disturb their sweet repose.

I now observed a gleam of light in my windows, as from the reflection of a candle. I rang the bell. Francis came, and informed me, that the light was from an apartment in the opposite wing, where the strangers had slept; but that they had just mounted their horses.

"What, so early?" said I.

"Yes," replied Francis, "I saw them from my window, and heard one of them say, 'I cannot sleep in this house, and I prefer the storm out of doors, to the

‘ rattling of these old windows; let us be
 ‘ off: Hacket will overtake us, and
 ‘ Oliver expects us:—what’s done is
 ‘ done.’ And, Sir,” added Francis,
 “ they are just galloped from the gates.”

“ What,” asked I, “ is Hacket gone
 to bed?”

“ O, yes,” answered Francis, “ he
 went to bed quite disguised in liquor,
 quarrelling with the strangers, but I
 could not tell distinctly about what; only
 I often heard them mention my young
 lady.”

“ Well, Francis,” said I, “ we must
 breakfast at a friend’s on the road, ten
 miles from home; so go to bed, good
 fellow, and be ready with the horses.”

When he was gone, I endeavoured
 to compose myself to rest, but in vain.
 Many dismal images arose in my mind.
 The funeral of Sir Gregory and his lady
 floated in my imagination. The wind
 had torn up some trees, as I guessed,

from the croakings of the rooks and ravens, whose nests had been destroyed by it. They approached nearer the House for cover, and by their hoarse noises banished all sleep from my eyes. Nevertheless, I consoled myself with such meditations as sooth the mind: and I did not forget, that "though sorrow tarrieth through the night, joy cometh in the morning." At length I obtained an hour of sound sleep; and when Francis called me, the tempest had entirely subsided, and the streaks of light in the cloudless East promised a day as fair as the night had been foul.

I arose early, and proceeded on my way. The morning was delightful, but my spirits were dull, which I attributed chiefly to want of rest.—I finished my journey in the evening, and found my friend surrounded by a cheerful family. My spirits revived. We talked over some of the days of our youth. The

sparkling wine was drank with quotations from Horace; and, for a pleasant hour or two, we forgot that our King was an Exile, and his throne stained with the blood of his Father. We could not help, however, at length reverting to the circumstances of the times; and deploring that atheism on the one hand, and that hypocrisy on the other, which had left so little genuine piety amongst us. We recollected, with sincere sorrow, the names of many who had been seduced by the sophistry of bad, but ingenious, men; and who, with their allegiance, had renounced their faith. My friend remarked truly, that the traitor to his King is generally an apostate to his God: and that it is idle to look for religious principles in him who has banished the moral virtues. The writers in favour of Infidelity, he observed, adopt the most alluring style; and the depravity of their tenets seldom shocks those who are themselves become depraved; who

rejoice to find a logick that can silence conscience; and in which every subterfuge of impiety is complimented, and rendered captivating, as a liberality of sentiment.—He concurred with me in thinking, and in hoping, that the present tyranny could not long subsist: and as Providence never inflicts a calamity without meaning that the sufferers should derive some advantage from it, so we trusted that these dire experiments of cruel Fanaticism, and wild Republicanism, would render such schemes sufficiently obnoxious to prevent their being repeated in this country.

The restlessness of the preceding night, and the exercise of my journey, prepared me for an early bed, in which I enjoyed the most refreshing sleep; and we all wore smiling faces at breakfast.

I related to my friend the history of my ward; that the day of her marriage

was at hand; and I insisted on him, and one or two of his daughters, becoming wedding guests. At length he consented; and the girls were speedily busied in making preparations for the bridal festivity.

In the dusk of the evening, a man came, knocking at the door. I heard my name mentioned; and that scarcely ere the man was before me. It was my dear Margaret's servant, William. "O, Sir!" cried he, "pray speed home; my young lady is dying."—"Dying!" exclaimed I. "Alack, yes, Sir," returned he; "she was taken deathly ill last night, and the Doctor says she cannot live."—"Cannot live!" reiterated I: "merciful God! my poor Margaret cannot live?—wherefore is this mighty affliction?—what is the matter? But why do I waste time in asking questions? Tell Francis to saddle the horses directly. You, William, must have one of my friend's:

your steed is tired out;—we must post all night.”

The worthy family offered me all the comfort in their power: but, alas, in such moments, how weak and futile is all human consolation! I retired for a few minutes, and, on my knees, supplicated, with fervour, the Lord of Life to spare my poor Orphan; to “make all her bed in her sickness;” and to restrain the angel of death yet a little longer.—Whatever be the ultimate effect of prayer, the act of praying, and the consciousness of having performed a sacred duty, never fails to endue us with patience, and inspire us with fortitude. It was thus I sought relief for the agony of heart that I endured,—and I was relieved.

The night was dark, and the clock struck eight, when I left my friend at Edwinstowe, to return to the Mansion;

Francis and William following. I guessed that we should reach home about five in the morning. Being three in number we had nothing to dread, except the possibility of losing our way, especially in a wood, of about four miles, which we could not avoid passing through.

We proceeded briskly, and without interruption, till, about one in the morning, my horse began to falter. The poor animal wanted refreshment: he was too aged for these swift expeditions; and I began to think myself cruelly remiss in having omitted to bring provender along with us. What I had forgotten, Francis had remembered: and on the margin of a brook, just before we entered the wood, the horses were fed, which enabled us to pass the most dismal part of our road with considerable rapidity; receiving unexpected light by the splendid corruscations of fiery clouds, from every point in the heavens, swiftly

rushing, like embattled legions, to the flaming North. We did not, however, escape the wood without some degree of alarm. We heard strange noises at a distance, and fancied we saw faint lights in some of the dells. I imagined these last to be nothing more than vapours; and William told me the noises were from gipsy tribes, which, he said, infested those parts. I was thankful that we had a calm night; and that we had hitherto met with nothing to impede our progress.

When we had gained the outskirts of the wood, a single horseman suddenly crossed us. My steed started, and I was somewhat terrified; but soon exclaimed, "Good morrow, fellow traveller! whither away so fast?"—With a sort of authoritative tone, he asked, "Are you liegemen, and true?"—I answered, "We are."—"Know you the Prince?" said he.—"We know him

not," I replied; "but we love him." The stranger returned, "Know him now, then: continue to love him, and pity his misfortunes; succour his friends, and keep his council,—farewell." And we soon heard his horse at a distance, making for the wood. — "Unhappy Prince!" said I, as I rode along: "hiding himself in unfrequented wilds and forests, instead of receiving homage under gilded canopies. Unhappy, misled country! subdued by Rebellion, and governed by Hypocrisy!—But Heaven's anger will not burn for ever; nor shall we long witness the galling insolence of Usurpation."

As the light began to dawn, my impatience increased. The return of the morning seemed to give fresh vigour to our horses, and we reached the Mansion a little before six o'clock. We presently gained admission, and Letitia was soon with me. She told me, her dear young

lady became worse every minute; and that six and thirty hours had woefully altered her.

I returned with her up stairs, and found Mrs. Evelyn sitting by the bedside. As soon as Margaret saw me, she held out her hand, and burst into tears. I was shocked to see her so wan, and so emaciated. I endeavoured to refrain from weeping. "Poor, dear, suffering angel!" I cried, "what sad calamity has befallen thee?"

"Alas, I know not," she replied: "the hand of death is upon me. I have suffered a great deal; but I feel better now you are come."

She pressed one of my hands between both her own, and looked wistfully in my face.—"Ah, my dear friend!" she said, "I am afraid I am very wicked, because I am not willing to die; yet the Physician tells me, and so does my

own heart, that I cannot live. I thought I was good, and could die very well; but then I was in health: and now what makes me wish for life, when I know I must so soon leave it? Surely, that is wicked, when I almost know the hour."

"Do not afflict thyself, my sweet innocent," I said: "thou art fit to die whenever God calls thee; but let us hope thou yet mayst live."

"O, no," she replied; "my poor heart is faithful, and never deceives me: it would have broken, had you not come. I have a great deal to say, but it is too full."—Fresh tears covered her face.—

"Indeed, indeed," she continued, "I am very weak in body and mind: your little Orphan is ashamed of these tears. I know it is wrong to cry, but I cannot help it. I ought to be very glad, and so I am, to have all my best friends with me. Dear Mrs. Evelyn is so good to me!—and Mr. Evelyn has prayed and set up with me so much, that he is

gone to bed, I am afraid, very ill.—I have not addressed God these two hours; but you will pray for me.—Come, Letitia,” she added, “Mrs. Evelyn will help you to hold me up, that I may kneel, while my dear guardian prays for me.—I must, somehow, have been very wicked, that God Almighty takes from me the power of kneeling before him.”

They raised her, each supporting her by an arm, while she knelt on the bed, with her hands lifted up, and folded in the act of supplication. Never were hands raised to Heaven more truly “washed in innocency” than those; save the hands that were nailed to the cross: never was the throne of grace supplicated by a heart more pure and fervent; save the heart that bled for the redemption of the world. I repeated a part of the prayers prescribed by our church for the sick.—Nothing can be more touching: nothing, with us, better

adapted for mortal frailty to utter, and heavenly compassion to hear. Indeed, no human composition can excel the whole service of the Church of England in pathos and sublimity; yet such is its masterly simplicity, that every sentence of it comes home to every man's bosom. —To each prayer the kneeling patient said a solemn and a sweet Amen. When we had finished, and while she was yet kneeling, she desired me to come nearer to her. Mrs. Evelyn and Letitia put her arms round my neck, and she embraced me. We both wept. "This," she said, "is the last embrace in this world!"—"O, no," said I, "do not think so: we must not despair. God may restore you to us."—"No, my ever dear and good protector," she replied: "but he will restore you, and all of you, to me, if I am worthy of going where you shall go.—I am more at ease than I was, though I feel fatigued, and think I could sleep a little :—but you must not

leave me."—She was again laid in her bed, and soon fell into a gentle slumber.

CHAPTER XIII.

I ENTREATED Mrs. Evelyn, who had been up all night, to retire; and I sent Letitia down stairs. When I observed that Margaret's rest was quiet and refreshing, and that she once or twice smiled in her sleep as I sat looking at her, I had a gleam of hope that Heaven was not inattentive to my silent ejaculations. She slept an hour and a half. Soon after she awoke, the Physician arrived. He congratulated his patient on her better looks, and her late repose; and, having given some directions to Letitia, I accompanied him down stairs. He informed me, that her frame had been so suddenly and so powerfully shaken by excruciating pains, as almost to baffle his art to prevent immediate dissolution. His skill, he said, would

have been ineffectual, had it not been seconded by her uncommon fortitude. That as he could not discover in what so much violence of disorder originated, he had not flattered himself, or his patient, with any hope of recovery; especially as he found her a young lady of great piety and strength of mind: and he was afraid, he added, that the next attack would prove fatal. At the same time, he said, that his ignorance of the cause did not warrant his positively pronouncing as to the final effect of the disorder. I thanked him for his candour and attention; and he said he would call in the evening.

I returned to my poor Margaret, who, supported by pillows, sat up in her bed. She desired Letitia to withdraw. —“Your presence, my ever beloved friend,” she said, “has already given me great comfort, and I have had a delightful sleep. I am quite revived. I

will not, however, flatter myself with any delusive hopes; but, believing my dissolution at hand, entreat you to indulge me in the observance of a few particulars when I am gone."—The tears came into my eyes.—"Nay, my dear friend," she continued, "let not my fortitude surpass yours. You have taught me not to fear death."

"Alas, my dear innocent," I said, "I fear it infinitely more than thou canst. The parting saint has always less cause to grieve than the bereaved friend."

"But do not," she resumed, "lament me too much; do not endanger your health; but preserve yourself to be the friend of other orphans, and of the afflicted whom God will throw in the way of your goodness.—How thankful am I," she added, "that he has given me strength to speak!—And now, valued friend, let me entreat you to lay my coffin by the side of my dear mama's. The absence of this man will allow the

time and opportunity for a mournful solemnity, which were intended for a festival.—I am afflicted for Sir Charles, and I feel to my heart the shock he will receive. Comfort him, dear Sir, as well as you can. Tell him, that I renounced the fortitude of a Christian, to weep for him. God will forgive these tears.”—She hid her face in a handkerchief, which, with difficulty, and with both her hands, she raised to her eyes. She sobbed aloud; and my tears streamed apace.—This gush of tenderness relieved us both.—She went on: “You know you are worthily the heir to my Father and myself. Time may give you the possessions of Sir Gregory: in that case, let there be perpetual provision for six hapless orphans. Meantime, out of the wealth which you have fortunately preserved for me, let Sir Charles’s love and generosity be recompensed. He expected nothing with me: as a proof, and as a legacy, of my affection,

give him enough to redeem his Estates without me. Give him, besides, one of my most costly rings. To my dear Elizabeth, give all my pearls; and let the rest of my jewels remain with you and yours.—And now, my dearest friend, let me thank you for all your goodness, your tenderness, and your indulgent care of me: and pray forgive me the faults I may have committed, and the uneasiness and vexations my wayward humours and childish errors may have occasioned you.” — She paused: my heart was too full to speak.—“One thing,” added she, “I had nearly forgotten: it is, perhaps, a childish fancy; but what are all the wishes of life?—on my coffin let there be displayed the device of a white rose.”

Letitia now entered with some medicine, and put letters into my hand, one of which was from Sir Charles Sedley, informing me, that he had forwarded

his wedding clothes to the Mansion, being on his road from London to his own House, where he meant to remain some days. So that I could not write to him till he should arrive there. I thought it best not to notice this occurrence.—Letitia, having given the medicine, again withdrew.

“I perceive,” said Margaret, “that I am better: and I am most devoutly thankful, under such severities of pains and calamities, for the preservation of my reason. It is a great mercy. The Physician has been more than physician to me: he has evinced much care and humanity; pray, dear Sir, let him have ample remuneration.—Letitia must not be forgotten; but I know you will do what is generous by all that have loved and served us: and not those only, but such around us as are in adversity.—You always taught me, by precept and example, to have in perpetual recollection

that divine and pathetick admonition of our Saviour, 'Give to him that asketh of thee; and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away*.'—

But I wish to live in the remembrance of the poor, by silent and effectual, rather than splendid donations.—Pardon me, that I talk thus: I do not dictate; I only request.—Dearest friend, restrain your tears.—Alas, how pale you are! I had forgotten, you had a wearisome journey through the perilous night: go, and repose yourself.—I have exhausted my spirit, and, perhaps, I shall sleep again.—Nay, I must insist on your seeking rest.—When you awake, come, and pray for me again."

I was obliged to comply. Going down stairs, I met Letitia, who told me, that Mrs. Evelyn was coming to her young lady; but that Mr. Evelyn was asleep.

* St. Matthew, v. 42.

I went into the library, and, seating myself in Sir Gregory's chair, weariness and grief soon threw me into a melancholy reverie, which was succeeded by a sort of dozing of some continuance, and from which I was aroused by the arrival of the Physician, who returned sooner than we expected; but, indeed, the evening was advancing.

We sent to inquire into the immediate state of the patient. Letitia came down, and informed us, that her young lady was asleep, but much disturbed, flushed, and feverish.—Mr. Evelyn now joined us, and we partook of a slight repast.

A carriage came to the gate. It brought Mrs. Willoughby, whom her mother had sent for; with her came a young lady, who was to have officiated as bride-maid to Margaret. Mr. Evelyn and I embraced his daughter. "Alas, dear Elizabeth," said I, "you are

come to a house of mourning: poor Margaret, I fear, weds her grave."—Elizabeth and her young friend shed tears.—“But,” resumed I, “we must not despair; and if it should please God to deprive us of her, we have still great consolation in knowing, that though we lose an angel, heaven gains a cherub.”—I uttered this with a voice of resignation, but my heart was pierced with anguish.

Mrs. Evelyn now came down, and, having affectionately welcomed her daughter and her friend, told us, that Margaret was awake, sitting up in her bed, without being raised, and insisted on having her clothes put on, and going into the dressing-room. “It is delirium,” said the Physician, “which is generally accompanied with strength to effect its objects: let her be indulged, madam.”—Mrs. Evelyn returned, with Mrs. Willoughby and the young lady.

The Physician was relating to us some of the extraordinary consequences of delirium, when a shriek summoned us up stairs. It was Mrs. Willoughby, alarmed for the safety of Margaret, who, whilst Letitia was putting on her night-robe, and whilst they were supposing she must be carried, suddenly rushed into the dressing-room, which had already been lighted up.

We were soon all assembled. As there is no greater calamity, so there is no sight more awful or affecting than Reason deranged. She placed herself at the toilette, and taking out some pearl bracelets, put them on; but, alas, her arm, which now looked like small ivory, was so much reduced, that the bracelets slipped over her hand, and fell on the floor. She then took one of Sir Charles's letters out of a drawer, and, after seeming to peruse it with great earnestness, "Letitia," she said, "let me see the

dresses Sir Charles sent me.—We must be quick, quick, my girl: he is waiting in the chapel.”—I went to her, but she did not notice me.—There were two white dresses, one superbly trimmed with silver, the other with gold. She got up, and turning them over, said, “I will have this silver,—it looks so delicate,—so modest,—put it on, girl; quick, put it on.” Letitia threw it over her night-robe. “Now my gloves—how slow you are!” Letitia drew one on, which instantly dropped off. The girl’s tears ran upon the other, as Margaret held out her arm. She looked her in the face: “Don’t cry, poor dear Letitia!” she said; “you shall always continue with me. Sir Charles will be very kind to you.”—She walked across the room, looking back at her dress, the train of which, spotted with silver, glittered in the profusion of lights. She stopped suddenly. “Well!” she exclaimed, with a smile, still lovely, “well! that is

delightful!—all these pretty stars come from the blue sky to dance with us!—Sir Charles gives a ball to the county—Where is my Elizabeth?—where is my guardian?”

We all surrounded her. Mrs. Wilmoughby went to embrace her, but she turned to Mrs. Evelyn, and, taking her arm, “Come, pretty bride-maid,” she said, “come along,”—and walked towards the door: but, starting back, she whispered, “No, we will not go down the grand stair-case,—the man of terror waits there,—he came one dark night; but my Father’s spirit would not let him sleep—O how the battlements shook!—Don’t you hear the storm howl in the forest?—why, the trees are tumbling from the cliff—The wind whistles o’er the green turf of that shepherd’s grave!—There’s a blue-bell in that field—two dew-drops fill its pretty eyes—O, don’t touch it!—alas, it is a

poor orphan!—What, you take that for a black cloud, showering down blood upon us!—that's Cromwell: See, there's Hacket! what does he do with my Father's sword?—fool! fool! it is a flaming sword; it devours him! Righteous sword, to avenge unrighteous deeds!—O, for my white steed! but he flies before the moon,—ha! there's an armed man upon him!"—

She turned her eyes towards the mantle-piece, where hung the picture of lady Judith. She gazed stedfastly upon it several minutes. "O my dear mama!" she exclaimed. — The Physician said, "Her senses are returning,"—and he beckoned us to be near her. Mrs. Willoughby and Letitia stood on each side of her. She sighed heavily, and again exclaimed, "O my poor dear mama!" and a flood of tears coursed down her cheeks. Her strength began to fail, and she fell into the arms of Elizabeth

and Letitia, who conducted her to the couch. She looked first at one, and then at the other, for some time.—“O, my dear Elizabeth!” she said, “are you here?—alas, I fear you do not know poor Margaret.” Elizabeth, weeping, and embracing her, replied, “We are all here, sweet.”—Margaret lifted up her eyes, and, seeing the company, was attempting to rise. I ran to support her, and she fell into Mrs. Willoughby’s arms. It was now with great difficulty that she articulated: “Kneel by me, my dear guardian,—pray, O pray for me!—I am surely dying!” Her head reclined on Elizabeth’s bosom. Mr. and Mrs. Evelyn had each hold of a hand. The poor young lady, who expected to have been a bride-maid, stood wiping the tears from Elizabeth’s eyes, her own falling fast on her bosom. There was a silent pause of a minute. Margaret turned her face towards me, as I stood leaning over her. She looked

earnestly on me, uttering, with painful interruptions, "I cannot pray,—indeed I cannot,—but my spirit is before God:—O remember his promise—we shall meet."—She folded her hands, and stretched forth her arms, as if anxious to pray; but in the midst of the exertion, she breathed a long sigh, and her hands fell. "That is the last!" said the Physician: "she is released."—"Poor dear angel!" exclaimed I, "she is indeed gone!—that sigh went to heaven—She dies the death of the righteous: may our last end be like hers!"

CHAPTER XIV.

THUS the Heiress of Sir Gregory, she whom, but a few hours before, I had left in the full possession of health and beauty, with the fairest prospects of long felicity, was, a few hours hence, to become a mouldering inhabitant of the dark grave; a meek companion of

the silent worm! Thus, in an instant, faded a blooming rose of Sharon: thus fell an unspotted lily of the valley!

Immediate and mighty grief overwhelms all the faculties: it stuns and confounds. The stricken heart hardly durst ask itself the sum of its calamity. —We remained silent and motionless, gazing on the ruin before us, till the Physician advised us to retire. Mrs. Willoughby staid with Letitia; and we sent up some maid servants to their assistance.

Early the next morning, I dispatched an express to Sir Charles Sedley, trusting that he was now arrived at his own House. But, before my messenger returned, I had letters from Sir Charles, for Margaret and myself, stating, that circumstances compelled him to decline calling at home, as he was obliged to take a circuitous route, and would be

with us the day before that appointed for the nuptials. — My messenger brought me word, that the utmost preparations were making at Sir Charles's for the reception of his lady. These occurrences tended only to increase my unhappiness; and taught me more than ever to lament the uncertain termination of all human projects. Sir Charles informed me, that the rumour of a Restoration was become very prevalent: and that the adherents of the Usurpation were availing themselves of all the means in their power to secure what they had obtained through the medium of Rebellion. He had also learned that Hacket was on the eve of espousing the woman whose principles were so correspondent with his own.

Mrs. Evelyn arranged every thing respecting Margaret's funeral; and Mr. Evelyn undertook to perform the sacred service of the dead. Mrs. Willoughby

and her young friend worked with their needles, on the velvet intended to cover Margaret's coffin, a white rose. It was with much difficulty they refrained tarnishing the lustre of their work, by bedewing it with their tears.

I passed many hours with the wakers, in sitting by the pale remains of my poor Margaret; regretting every minute the approach of that which should deprive me even of this consolation. The time arrived. We had appointed the fifth evening, when I directed the coffin to be put in the great ante-chamber, previous to its being taken to the chapel. We met in mournful silence around it. Not only Mr. and Mrs. Evelyn, Mrs. Willoughby and her young friend, Letitia, the Physician, and myself, were present; but I had requested the attendance of all the servants in the House. Old Matthew too had come from the Rectory to take a last sight of his young

lady. The lid of the coffin was left open. Each, in turn, went to look upon that face which they were never to see again, returning with redoubled sorrow, till the lamentation became audible and general.

I went the last. A thousand tender remembrances rushed into my mind as I stood there; and I could scarcely withdraw myself from the contemplation of a countenance which I had never beheld but with delight from its infancy. I was almost tempted to forbid the fastening down of the lid for the present; but Mr. Evelyn, coming up to me, and taking my arm, led me away. "Sir," he said, "this, though a heavenly sorrow, must not be too much indulged."

"Alas," replied I, "we sorrow for ourselves; the calamity is to us. This form, seemingly so intelligent, even in death, is deaf to our cries, and blind to our tears. Yet, what has been so many

years dear to us, we cannot but lament. It is a salutary weakness of nature that dictates our sorrows. O may that weakness strengthen our virtues, that we, like this angel, in the hour of death, may become entitled to the tears and prayers of those that love virtue, and revere holiness!"

Whilst I was thus speaking, Mr. Evelyn had caused the lid to be screwed down. The chapel bell gave notice that all was ready. Our little procession began. Mr. Evelyn, as officiating minister, preceded by lights, led on; the coffin following. Singly, I walked next to it; then came Mrs. Evelyn and the Physician; Mrs. Willoughby and the weeping bride-maid; Letitia and old Matthew; Francis and William, and the rest of the men, with the female servants, in their order.

When the bier was rested in the aisle

of the chapel, and while Mr. Evelyn was in the desk, Mrs. Willoughby and myself, as if impelled at the same moment, by the like impulse, kneeled down on each side of the coffin.—Who shall describe the feelings of such a moment? — We continued thus till the bearers came to proceed to the vault, where Margaret's remains were deposited by the side of the lady Judith's.

We were taking our parting look, each eye being fixed on the white rose, that emblem of the innocent heart it covered, when, for a moment, as if to display its lustre, a lambent flame shone upon it, and vanished. Its coming and going were so imperceptible, and yet its appearance so obvious, that none of the company testified any surprise at the instant; but when we were returning, every one was speaking of it. I asked Mr. Evelyn, whether this singular effect could arise from the motion of the torches; but he

declared not. He hoped, he said, that the company might attribute it to some such cause; but, in his opinion, it was evidently supernatural. I said, I wished, as much as possible, to discourage all superstition; but that the best way was to be silent, rather than falsify what we believed to be the truth. "It is, perhaps," said I, "a heavenly testimony of the divine purity of her mind:" and we agreed to say no more on the subject.

In a day or two, Mrs. Willoughby and her young friend departed; and Mr. and Mrs. Evelyn were desirous of going home, and of my accompanying them. But as I knew not where to send to Sir Charles Sedley, I thought it right to await his coming, which would take place in a few days; and therefore, retaining Francis and Letitia, I remained at the Mansion: Mr. and Mrs. Evelyn, and the other servants, returning to the Rectory.

My hours now passed with great heaviness. I wandered up and down the frequented and unfrequented parts of the Mansion, without comfort, and without desire. Hope, in my breast, was almost extinct. She had no new prospects to attract me; her magical powers could no more beguile me; a sigh had shattered her talisman into a thousand pieces: the last sigh of Margaret seemed to release me from all sublunary concerns*. The evenings were becoming

* The illusions of Hope have given birth to innumerable metaphors. I transcribe the following, from a recent publication, as containing imagery so exquisitely splendid and beautiful, as will not easily be surpassed.—Ed.

“Lo! here a cloud comes sailing, richly clad
In royal purple, which the parting beams
Of bounteous Phœbus edge with tints of gold
And lucid crimson. One might fancy it
A noble bird, that laves its graceful form,
And bathes its rosy bosom in the light:
Look! how it swells, and rears its snowy crest
With haughty grandeur; while the blue expanse,

long, and proportionably wearisome to such as are bereft of society. The world is a dreary wilderness, and life a melancholy pilgrimage, to those who carry in their hearts the keen arrows winged by disappointment and affliction; and who walk over the graves of all their hopes and wishes. But, every man, be his state what it may, will always find that he has duties to perform. I cherished in my remembrance the benevo-

In smiling patience lets the boaster pass,
And swell his train with all the lazy vapours
That hover in the air: an easy prey
To the gigantick phantom, whose curl'd wing
Sweeps in these worthless triflers of the sky,
And wraps them in his bosom. Go, vain shadow!
Sick with the burthen of thy fancied greatness,
A breath of zephyr wafts thee into nothing,
Scatters thy spreading plumes, uncrowns thy front,
And drives thee downward to thy mother earth,
To mix with vapour and dissolve in dew.

Such are the dreams of Hope"—

MATILDA BETHAM — *Elegies and other
small Poems.*

lent desires of Margaret, and, determining to console myself by embracing every opportunity of complying with them, passed much of my time in wandering round the domain, and its neighbourhood, seeking the necessitous, and relieving the distressed, in the name of God, and as the almoner of Margaret.

I was one evening detained later than usual, by stopping at a farm-house, to baptize a dying child; and on my entering the Mansion, was met at the door by Letitia, who entreated to speak with me alone, and informed me, that she had certainly seen the spirit of her young lady, which, she said, passed her in the long gallery, as she went to turn down the beds. I would not hear the particulars. I told her, that her love for her mistress would often bring her image to her view; but I discouraged every idea of vision: and I retired to the library, my dog following me.

From books I could derive little consolation: and my mind was not yet sufficiently tranquillized to read for amusement. I therefore sat ruminating by the fire; Sir Gregory's Bible being on the table before me, and the dog lying at my feet. A subject passed in my mind on which I had occasion to look in the book; but in turning the leaves, a small white hand impeded my progress, the forefinger pointing to a certain spot, and instantly disappearing. I raised my head, but could not perceive any thing: the dog, however, was on his legs, and wagging his tail, as at the sight of somebody he knew.

I arose with a perturbation I had never before experienced, and walked up and down the room a few minutes. I then stood still; but nothing was to be seen or heard; and the dog had resumed his recumbent position. I returned to the book, and endeavoured to recollect the

precise spot on which the finger had rested. I could not easily forget it. The words were these: "But if a man
 "come presumptuously upon his neigh-
 "bour, to slay him with guile, thou
 "shalt take him from mine altar, that
 "he may die*." Still, considering the
 musing mind I was in, I conceived that
 this might be an illusion of the imagination;
 and, on that principle, I had
 nothing to account for, but the dog's
 rising, and wagging his tail. This,
 however, surpassed my conjecture, and
 left my mind in a state of confused
 amazement.

I went into the garden, and walked
 awhile. The night was dark, and the wind
 boisterous. The air revived my spirits;
 and my mind was relieved from the stupe-
 faction in which surprize had left it, and
 I endeavoured to drive from my recol-

* Exodus, xxi, 14.

lection what I had seen, or, rather to attribute it to the effect of disordered fancy.

As I was without company, I went early to bed. In my sleep, however, the white hand floated before me; and I was twice awakened by the clanging of the large folding doors leading from the principal suite of rooms into the side wing on the left of the Mansion. Supposing this to be effected by the wind, I rang my bell, and desired Francis to fasten those doors. He returned, assuring me, that he found them locked, and a perfect silence prevailing in that part of the House. I concluded that I had been mistaken, and Francis retired; the clock then striking Twelve, and the moon shining bright.

Offering a short ejaculation to Heaven, I soon fell into a sleep of some duration, undisturbed by dreams. I had

not slept long, before a tremendous noise again aroused me. It seemed to be in a remote part of the House. I started, and was again on the point of ringing the bell. Raising myself a little, and stretching forth my hand towards the tassel, a sudden gleam of light carried my attention to the foot of the bed. The curtains swiftly separating, the shrouded shadow of Margaret stood before me! The light of the moon was full upon her. I observed her face as pale as the snow-drop, and marked with pensive sorrow. Her eyes were bent on the ground. In her left hand hung a white rose. I was about to speak; but was prevented by her raising her eyes, which no sooner met mine, than, pointing with the forefinger of her right hand to the rose, on which I now discerned some drops of blood, the curtain suddenly closed, and I was left in darkness: for such it appeared after the swift withdrawing of so much light. The

chapel bell instantly struck Two; a gust of wind brought the sound full upon my ear. I was thoroughly awake. The presence, or the seeming presence, of one whom I so dearly loved, though clad in a shroud, did not at all dismay me. But the image was no sooner gone, and the darkness returned, than a sensation of something like terror pervaded my bosom; and I began to reflect deeply on the event, and its concurrent circumstances.

Compelled as I was, to admit the reality of what I had just witnessed, and what had occurred in the library, my philosophy was put to flight, and it remained only to consider on the probable cause of an effect so extraordinary.

The scripture passage was evidently an intimation of secret murder: and the spots of blood on the visionary rose, must either mean nothing, or bear some

similar import. The obvious interpretation of all this was, that my poor dear sufferer must have received something destructive of life at Hacket's supper, which might have been conveyed in the small jelly, with the device of the white rose. This, indeed, explained the hieroglyphicks, and accounted for speedy and violent pains, and rapid dissolution. But still, this was surmising on the evidence of a shadow.

CHAPTER XV.

IN the morning I sent for Hacket's cook, telling her, that I wished for a few sweetmeats, and especially for a jelly of the same kind as that which, at her master's supper, was distinguished by a white rose; keeping my eye fixed on her, to observe whether I could trace any sign of confusion in her countenance. But she informed me, that several of the sweetmeats, and particularly the

jelly, which, she said, was the only one at the table, were brought by one of the gentlemen who supped with us.—I desired her to make me some trifles, and she withdrew.

Her intelligence served strongly to confirm my suspicions, and accounted for Hacker's recommendation of that sweetmeat, and the stranger's officiousness in handing it to Margaret. "Dear, dear saint!" said I, "and has thy precious life been thus sacrificed!—could not thy meek innocence and smiling countenance prevail on the wretch to stay his hand?—could not the very grace with which it was received, urge him to snatch back the fatal potion?—O, hard of heart! and is it thus!"—

I scarcely knew what step to take. After dinner, I ordered Francis to saddle the horses. I thought it right to go to the Physician, and inform him of my

conjectures; but I was deterred awhile by the shame I felt of accounting for them by supernatural means; and because I knew that Physicians admit of none but natural causes. The circumstances of the times, and the violent proceedings practised by those who wished to retain under the Restoration, which was supposed to be approaching, what the Commonwealth had unjustly given them, authorized me to impute what I suspected to Hacket: and I determined to acquaint the Physician with my apprehensions, as the result of probable supposition.

My impatience would not permit me to wait till the next day, but I arrived at the Physician's at sun-set. When I had related to him the particulars of the supper, he arose, and walked across the room in great agitation. "Sir," said he, "what you mention reveals to me all that was unaccountable in the disor-

der. I could not discover its origin, and was amazed at its effects, which were such as I never before witnessed. If it were poison, it must have been of a very uncommon and a very subtle nature; for the disorder, or the severe torments of it, never struck me as an operation of any species of poison. But," he added, "I am partly convinced; and I hope you will permit me to open the body."

To this I consented. He prevailed upon me to stay all night, proposing to accompany me home on the succeeding evening, after visiting his patients: for we deemed it most expedient to do this business by night; making only Francis and the Physician's servant, who should secretly convey the coffin into the House, privy to the transaction. I proposed his having the assistance of a surgeon, which he declined.

I passed part of the next morning in riding round the neighbourhood, and part in the Physician's library. I felt a powerful inclination to communicate to him what I had seen: the dread of an intelligent mind thinking me capable of propagating vulgar superstitions, alone withheld me.—All that Margaret had said in our last conversation recurred to me; and I could discover no reason why the operations of God on matter, animate or inanimate, should be circumscribed within the narrow limits of human philosophy.—I thought I would make it a part of my conversation at dinner, till I recollected, that the conveyance of important facts, so as to make their due impression, is much facilitated or retarded by surrounding scenery, and temperament of mind. We must watch occasion to influence opinion. Though the spirit of the Most High pervades the earth, and flows in the waters; passes in the winds, and variegates the clouds;

yet, in the contracted mind of man, the Divine Presence is more immediate on holy mountains, and in consecrated groves; in solemn fanes, and sacred temples. In these Religion first reared her altars: from these promulgated those truths which her priests would have uttered in vain in the common habitations, and among the common assemblages of men. From analogous reasoning, I declined entering into so peculiar an explanation for the present; resolved to wait the event of anatomical research, and keep my secret and my counsel to myself.

The Physician's residence was about sixteen miles from the Mansion. The days were short, and we proposed arriving between eight and nine at night. We had not proceeded far before some black clouds, rendering the evening prematurely dark, threatened a storm, which soon burst forth in thunder and

lightning. We quickened our pace. The horses being frightened, we made the servants ride abreast with us. Upwards of seven miles of the road lay through the forest adjoining to the oak avenue, terminating the back gardens of the Mansion. I seldom heard thunder so loud; and never saw lightning so vivid. The flashes did not so much impede our sight, as enlighten the path. They swept in fleeting columns along the ground. The rapid heels of our horses were dipped in liquid fire. This moment the forest was wrapped in darkness; the next in flame.

The thunder still increased in dreadfulfulness, and the lightning became incessant. About the middle of the forest, we perceived a white horse on full speed before us. "There," said Francis, "is my young lady's horse, broken from the garden field." We again quickened our pace, and galloped swiftly. A stream

of lightning shewed the white horse more distinctly, and somebody upon him. Francis, while we were yet at a considerable distance, called aloud: the steed suddenly turning, and illuminated with the passing fire, revealed for a moment, and but a moment, the object upon him. It was the shade of Margaret, clothed in black, with a white rose waving in her hand. It vanished with the lightning.—“Good heaven!” exclaimed the Physician, “is that something or nothing?”—“It is,” I said, “what I have seen before—these are fearful times, good Sir;—but let us haste.”—We now seemed to leave the thunder behind us, and the lightnings became less frequent.

Coming within a mile of the Mansion, we observed the principal suite of rooms illuminated; “Why,” said the Physician, “what festivity have you at the Mansion?”—“I know not,” I replied: “I suppose young Hacket has brought

home his bride; in which case, we must wait an opportunity to move the body into the private apartment of the chapel."

As we approached nearer, we perceived a brilliant company, in the act, as we supposed, of sitting down to a collation. Our attention was fixed as we rode with slackened pace along.— "Ah," said I, sighing, and communing with my own heart, "thus ought it speedily to have been with my poor Margaret! The lustre of that night should, indeed, have outshone the splendour of the day. But, alas, who shall say, my eyes shall be gladdened with to morrow's sun-beams? Life itself is but as one of them."

When we began to think we could distinguish the company, and were noticing the splendid attire of some who were entering, which attracted our eyes to the folding-doors of the grand saloon,

we were amazed to see, clad in long robes of deep black, the female form we had just beheld on the shadowy steed. She came with an air of great dignity. We could scarcely discern her countenance; but the white rose still waved in her hand. As she approached towards the centre of the saloon, we could perceive the company suddenly rising; and in their rising they assumed horrible and ghastly shapes, such as chilled us to look upon. Ere we had time to express our surprise, we fancied we heard a loud shriek, and the lights instantly vanished, leaving the Mansion in darkness.—“The lightnings and the vapours of the night,” said the Physician, “have filled the air with fleeting figures, and peopled the House with shadows.” — I made no reply. We were just at home. The thunder rolled at a distance, and the rain began to descend in torrents.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE storm had expedited our journey. We entered the House as the clock struck eight. Every thing there was quiet. There was a fire in the library, whither we retired; and I desired one to be made in the adjoining parlour; giving directions, at the same time, to Francis, as soon as he should find a proper opportunity, to convey the coffin thither.

I sent for Letitia, intending to give orders about a bed for the Physician; but was told, that she had been confined all day with illness, arising from terror occasioned the preceding night, by uncommon noises, and strange sights.—“You must remove her, Sir,” said the Physician: “this place is lonely; and the imagination of women is very potent.

—I shall," added he, "make no comment on the occurrences of this night, which, however, would stagger an unstable philosophy. Dreadful objects become doubly dreadful at certain hours, and in certain places; always exciting correspondent ideas."

We conversed some time on these subjects. I remarked, that our knowledge of the operations of nature, though derived from the observation of several thousand years, is so extremely limited, that it is impossible for us, without great presumption, to determine what are, and what are not phenomena. Nations, now enlightened by science, formerly trembled under an eclipse; and a comet, that swift celestial traveller, who may yet revisit us but once in several centuries, still excites the dread of millions. Doubtless, Nature has innumerable appearances which we deem phenomena, if not miraculous, because, to us, they

are rare; and which, nevertheless, are in her regular and ordinary course. "But think, Sir," I added, "if it is thus in the gross and material world, and that we stand justly amazed at every thing we behold, how infinitely surpassing all these must be the wonders of the world of spirits, where every thing, to us, is, indeed, supernatural; the least glimpse of which is as a burning light, discovering the darkness of our philosophy, and the futility of our researches."

Our disquisitions were abruptly ended, by Francis informing us that every thing was ready in the parlour, where we found the Physician's servant busied in unscrewing the lid of the coffin. We were both somewhat struck on entering the room. My friend declared that this was a dissection under such extraordinary circumstances, that he was dispossessed of all those feelings of curiosity and satisfaction which usually accompany scien-

tifick inquiry. "I never," said he, "felt myself less a disciple of Galen than at this moment: nevertheless, we will proceed."

We were going to lend some assistance to the servant, when Francis announced the arrival of a gentleman, who, he said, was impatient to see me. "Who is it, Francis?" I asked. "Truly, Sir," replied Francis, "I do not know: he would not tell his name: he is wet through and through with the rain; for it pours yet; and he has a wild distracted look with him."—"Shew him," I said, "into the library; and do you, Francis, wait in the room till I send you out."

I went to receive the traveller, who proved to be the younger of the two strangers who supped with us on the fatal farewell night. I felt a sort of dread pervade my frame as I met him. He perceived it,

"Sir," said he, "do not be alarmed. I guess your thoughts:—but I mean you no offence."

"I presume," said I, "you want Mr. Hacket: he is not yet returned."

"Nor ever will," replied he: "Hacket is dead."

"Dead!" exclaimed I:—"the angel of Retribution has been quick!"

"Within this half hour, Sir," he added, "I saw that angel. The shock is yet upon me; and I crave some cordial to restore my spirit."

"Come this way, Sir," I replied, and led him into the parlour.—At sight of the coffin he started.

"Fear not," said I, "the inoffensive dead: a thousand spectres rising from the grave are not half so frightful as one wicked man."

"That's true," he answered; "and therefore am I sore dismayed. This night have I seen a wicked man, and seen his end."

"This gentleman," said I to the Physician, whose servant I desired to withdraw; "this gentleman was one of the party at the supper"—

"But," interrupted he, "without any knowledge of intended mischief. I knew not then that the death of the Heiress was plotted."

I requested the stranger to be seated, and take some wine. He cast repeated looks towards the coffin.—"There, Sir," said I, "is the sad subject of our discourse: in that coffin lies the Heiress of the Mansion. Suspicions arising as to the cause of her death, we have brought her from the tomb, in order to ascertain the truth."

"Alas, Sir," he replied, "my testimony renders it needless. You may recollect that after our early supper, we retired to a double-bedded room, myself and Raudern, the brother of her whom Hacket was to have wedded. We had

slept but two or three hours ere he became
 restless, and impatient to be gone. The
 morning was boisterous, but still he
 would be gone, saying, 'what's done is
 done.' As we rode through the wood,
 the tempest beating on us, and I won-
 dering at his choosing to relinquish the
 shelter of the house for the dark, unshel-
 tered road, 'Raudern,' said I, 'what
 do you mean by repeating, what's done
 is done?'—'I mean,' replied he, 'that
 the proud Heirefs of Sir Gregory shall
 never sup again in this world.'—'Good
 heaven!' I exclaimed, 'what do I hear?'
 —'She would not,' he added, 'marry
 Hacket, and so secure his title to the
 Estates, in case of the Restoration; nor
 would my Sister marry him while the
 Heirefs lived to snatch possession from
 him. Cromwell and Hacket settled it.
 The jelly I handed to her was a deadly
 poison.'—'For God's sake!' I cried, 'let
 us return, and arouse the House, and
 seek assistance.'—'It is in vain,' he said;

'nothing can impede the progress of the potion, though it will be some time before it operates, thus to elude suspicion: it is an Italian infusion too subtle and potent for any art to master; nor can one Physician in a thousand guess at the patient's disorder. Cromwell always carries it about him.'—My heart sunk as I heard this; and the image of the lady has never since been absent from my mind."

"It is greatly to be lamented," said the Physician, "that you did not, nevertheless, give the information: for I do not think there is any poison whose effect is not instantaneous, that may not find its antidote."

The gentleman continued: "I never mentioned my knowledge of the circumstance to Hacket himself, to whom my Estate was mortgaged, and who was to secure provision for me under the Protector. Fool that I was! in my adversity to league with prosperous wicked-

ness, and to forsake the righteous standard of the King!—We were seated, with company, at dinner, when tidings were brought of the Heiress's death. I observed, that while his friends were congratulating Hacket on an event which secured to him the free possession of his Estates, he turned pale, and touched no more meat; but soon drank himself into a state of intoxication.—It was not till a few days ago that I saw him again, when he desired me to accompany him to the Mansion, whence he was to proceed to Raudern's sister. He intended to have slept here to night; but he sleeps a sleep from which he shall not awake before all the dead arise. And I hold it merciful in Providence, that I am not involved in the same fate. The thunder was alike tremendous over my head; and the lightnings enveloped me as well as Hacket."

"What!" said I, "did Heaven strike his hard heart with its avenging thunder?"

“Ah, Sir,” continued he, “in the black whirlwind his unprepared soul flew to the everlasting tribunal.—The storm overtook us as we entered the forest. I need not mention its violence: this Mansion must have shaken with it. In the midst, and after a momentary interval of darkness, as we rode swiftly along, the next blaze of lightning discovered, without our sense of its approach, a white steed suddenly galloping between us, on which sat a female figure; a pale rose, that seemed to be of living fire, flaming in her hand. The instant we beheld it, Hacket screamed out, ‘O God! O God!’ and his horse flew with tenfold rapidity, the white steed keeping close beside him. My blood curdled with horror as I spurred my horse to follow. We were soon out of all road, flying through thickets of trees that at any other time I should have thought impassable: the thunder increasing, and the lightning enwrapping the objects before me, so

that I seemed to be pursuing steeds formed of the lightning itself. Perceiving that we approached the railing of the ancient deep stone quarry on the north border of the forest, I cried aloud to stop. For the first time, Hacket turned his head. The sheeted lightning of the moment shewed his countenance livid and ghastly; his eyes starting from their sockets. I saw death in his face. No mortal strength could stop his horse. His flight was urged by fear, in its most powerful form. The fiery rose flamed beside him. He flew over the railing. In the midst of the thunder, I heard a long and dreadful shriek. In that moment the white steed seemed to mix with the lightning, and dissolve in the clouds. Almost breathless myself, and my horse panting, I reached the railing. I dismounted, and stood some time looking over. Nothing could I hear, but the thunder: nothing could I see, but the lightning, till the storm began to subside,

which appeared to retire with the terrific shadow that had led us to this tremendous precipice. Then, indeed, I heard the troubled waves of the river dashing against the bottom of the quarry. I pondered awhile, till the rain began to fall. I partly knew the direction in which the Mansion stands from the quarry, and, sorrowfully remounting my horse, hither am I come."

"And you shall be welcome, Sir," said I: "for I perceive that you have in your mind the seeds of virtue, which your unfortunate association with the guilty has not been able to root up. Let them grow and flourish. Let the alarming catastrophe of this night make its due impression on all our hearts. 'Knowing, therefore, the terrors of the Lord, let us persuade men*.' How swift and signal has been his vengeance! 'Our God is a consuming fire.'—My friend," conti-

* St. Paul.

nued I, addressing the Physician, "our doubts have been solved by thunders and lightnings, by winged messengers expressly sent from Heaven. The body of this dear saint, which has been foully despoiled of its celestial spirit, we may now return to the peaceful tomb, in the earnest hope that we shall one day meet it in the glorious regions of immortality."

I rang the bell for Francis and the Physician's servant to take the coffin, which I once more followed, and saw restored to its place, by the side of the lady Judith's. A few tears dropped, and, as Francis locked the door, I sighed a last farewell. My mind was considerably relieved. Having taken some refreshment with my visitors, sweetened by much rational discourse, I sought, and found, upon my pillow, an undisturbed repose.

The morning was pleasant. When I awoke, the Physician and the stranger

were walking in the picture gallery. I ordered breakfast in the great ante-chamber, whence we could see the gardens tinged with the rich, but fading hues of Autumn, inspiring pleasing melancholy; and observe the yellow leaf falling before the passing breeze. Whilst we were at our repast, we noticed at a distance a carriage swiftly coming towards the Mansion. It was a coach and six, richly adorned, and attended by a train of servants, whose liveries glittered in the sun. As it came near, my heart beat with inexpressible sensations, especially when I beheld joy beaming in the countenance of Sir Charles Sedley, as he was looking out of the carriage window, expecting a welcome in the smile of Margaret . . .

THE END.

